

Questions and Answers from Rural Health Open Door Forum-

August 18, 2020

1. One of the biggest issues that we are facing right now particularly as a rural hospital is trying to get ready to deal with the price transparency requirements that are effective Jan. 1. There is absolutely no way we're going to have the main charge master requirement addressed. That's a long ways off but we're hoping to at least try to get the shoppable services addressed as we know that would be helpful to patients. Is CMS going to provide an extension on these requirements given the pandemic? I mean to pay the \$300 a day penalty just seems like an extra burden right now for rural hospitals. So is CMS going to provide some sort of extension for rural providers in particular from the January 1 deadline?
 - a. Let me just acknowledge that CMS has heard from a number of rural providers. their concerned about this. I can't answer you at the moment as to what we might be doing. But I acknowledge that we've had conversations about it based on the input we have received.
2. I'm calling from Oklahoma where many rural counties have only about 30% or 40% broadband coverage. So, although there is a lot of interest in Telehealth for many rural residents, it's not a practical matter. Or, the cell plans in these rural areas don't include much in the way of Internet connection or have just a certain number of minutes or quantity of Internet connection for the rural residents. What is available in terms of being able to help rural residents with the costs of Telehealth, their own personal out-of-pocket costs for Internet services on their phones. Is that something that Medicare Advantage plans can offer to members, more Internet service in rural areas in order to make Telehealth economical for patients?
 - a. I would encourage you to consider submitting that concern as public comments on the physician fee schedule so that we can consider it formally through our rulemaking process.
3. Will CMS be issuing a Meddlers Matters document or any other instruction regarding documentation requirements for Telehealth services?
 - a. I am not aware of anything in the works currently but we'll certainly take that into consideration. And we will be issuing, presumably we'll be issuing some sort of guidance once we have the finalized policies.
 - i. My concern is that there could be the need to make sure that for each service reimbursed, that it actually was provided. That's the reason for the question.
 1. Yes, absolutely understood. And like the prior caller, I would actually very much encourage you to submit that as a public comment. We would certainly be considering issues like the ones that you just articulated when it comes to how and if we finalized the policies in the proposed rule so thank you for that.