



JUN 20 2016

Robert L. Wergin, MD, FAAP  
Board Chair  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
1133 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Dr. Wergin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the timely release of medical records from hospitals and other healthcare facilities to community primary care physicians, to promote safe transitions of care for patients after discharge. As you stated, prompt notification is also required as part of Transitional Care Management.

On November 3, 2015, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that would significantly revise the Medicare hospital, critical access hospital, and home health agency Conditions of Participation for discharge planning (80 Fed. Reg. 68,126). The proposed revisions in this regulation are focused on successful transitions of care for patients and the reduction of unplanned readmissions, adverse events, and avoidable complications. The proposed regulation includes requirements specific to communication between healthcare providers and facilities during inpatient stays, as well as when discharged to home. Transmitting the discharge summary and discharge instructions within 48 hours of discharge to the patient's primary care provider, if known, is one of the proposed regulations. Ongoing collaborative communication is essential for improving the overall quality of care and patient outcomes.

Once the discharge planning regulations are released, the sub-regulatory guidance found in the CMS State Operations Manual (SOM) will be updated and released. The SOM provides interpretive guidelines of the regulations and is a resource for Federal and State Survey Agencies as well as healthcare providers, facilities, professional associations, consultants and others in the healthcare industry. The Medicare Learning Network Discharge Planning Booklet and other Medicare publications will also be revised to reflect the new regulations. Although you have requested an update to current publications, we will not be able to change the requirements or guidance until the final regulations are published.