

Medicare Home Health Face-to-Face Encounter

Houston Senior Living Guide — For hospital discharge planners and ordering physicians

Why this document exists

Medicare requires a physician (or allowed practitioner) face-to-face (F2F) encounter with the patient no more than 90 days before, or within 30 days after, the start of home health care. The encounter must be related to the primary reason for home health and must be documented in a way that supports the homebound status and skilled-need certification (42 CFR 424.22; CMS MLN Matters SE1405).

Encounter Documentation Fields

- Patient MRN (do not include on external referrals):
- Date of face-to-face encounter:
- Encounter location (hospital, clinic, home):
- Practitioner name, NPI, and signature:
- Primary clinical reason related to home-health need:
- Supporting diagnoses (ICD-10):
- Homebound status justification (describe the normal inability to leave home without taxing effort):
- Skilled need justification (why nursing/PT/OT/ST is required):
- Certifying physician attestation (if different from encounter practitioner):
- Referring hospital + discharge planner contact:

Reminder to ordering physicians

The F2F encounter must be performed by the certifying physician, an allowed non-physician practitioner (NP, CNS, PA) working with the certifying physician, or the acute-care physician during a related hospital stay. The encounter cannot be performed by the home health agency. See CMS MLN Matters SE1405 for the current guidance.

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