



INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 1040

DATE: August 17, 2011

TO: Iowa Medicaid Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Intermediate Care Facilities and Nursing Facilities

FROM: Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

RE: Changes to the Nursing Facility Admission Process:
Preadmission Screening and Resident Reviews (PASRR)

EFFECTIVE: September 1, 2011

As you are likely aware, the Iowa Department of Human Services, Mental Health and Disability Services Division is implementing significant changes to the State's Pre-Admission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) process in response to the recent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) mandates. Within just the past two years, CMS has:

- Increased compliance analyses of state operating strategies;
- Directed increased Regional CMS oversight of PASRR processes;
- Provided specific requirements to states to modify their processes to comply with federal guidelines, including guidelines for conflict-free evaluations, and;
- Directed state Survey and Certification Directors to step up inclusion of PASRR in survey activity.

The Department of Justice in their Olmstead activity, has, likewise, become actively involved in enforcing the tenets of PASRR through ensuring that states use their PASRR process to place individuals in the most integrated settings appropriate to their needs.

Iowa is committed to revising its process to meet these mandates and beginning September 1, 2011 Ascend Management Innovations (Ascend) will assume responsibility for the following services under contract with the Iowa Department of Human Services, Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Division:

- **Applying Exempted Hospital Discharge decisions** for individuals who have PASRR targeted conditions (suspected mental illness, mental retardation, and/or developmental disabilities). The *Exempted Hospital Discharge* (EHD) means the individual is being admitted to the nursing facility directly from an acute care stay and will require nursing facility services for the same condition and the attending physician certifies the stay is likely to be less than 30 days. This allows persons with PASRR targeted conditions to be admitted to Medicaid certified nursing facilities efficiently for short term specific reasons. This Exemption is limited to the 30 days; a Level II must be completed by Ascend on or before the 40th calendar day from the individual's admission to the nursing facility.

- **Applying Categorical decisions** for individuals who have PASRR targeted conditions (suspected mental illness, mental retardation, and/or developmental disabilities). Categorical decisions enable persons with PASRR targeted conditions to be admitted to Medicaid certified nursing facilities after an abbreviated PASRR Level II evaluation is conducted. Categorical decisions include terminal conditions, very serious medical conditions, 60 day convalescent care decisions, etc. Ascend will be responsible for conducting the abbreviated PASRR Level II evaluations for persons eligible for categorical decisions.
- **Conducting PASRR Level II evaluations for persons known or suspected of having serious mental illness that are residing in or applying to a Medicaid Certified nursing facility.**
- **Ensuring Level II Recommended Services are delivered.** CMS has indicated their commitment “to hold State Medicaid agencies accountable for ensuring compliance with federal requirements”, including the requirement that states monitor the delivery of services required through the PASRR evaluation. Ascend will be responsible for conducting this oversight.

Ascend offers longstanding experience managing these services for a variety of states and Iowa looks forward to the efficiencies it will gain through the Ascend screening processes. We will issue additional communications through the Ascend website (<http://www.ascendami.com/pasrr/iowa/>) to alert you and your staff of upcoming trainings, as well as changes to forms, procedures, and policies.

In order to prepare providers for these changes, Ascend will offer several training opportunities in the coming weeks. Ascend will post web-training sessions on their website (<http://www.ascendami.com/pasrr/iowa/>) so that provider staff may view trainings at their convenience. In addition, Ascend representatives will conduct detailed live trainings in mid to late August 2011. Details will be posted on the Ascend website and circulated soon.

Please circulate this memo among staff at your facility.
Information about trainings, procedures, form revisions, and other updates about these processes will be posted on the Ascend website over the coming weeks:
<http://www.ascendami.com/pasrr/iowa/>

Please bookmark this website and visit it frequently for postings and updates

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Andrea Womack at awomack@ascendami.com or leave a message on the “Feedback” link at <http://www.ascendami.com/pasrr/index4.asp>.