

§ 411.352

42 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–10 Edition)

(3) Patients receiving a surgical procedure; or

(4) Any other specialized category of services that the Secretary designates as inconsistent with the purpose of permitting physician ownership and investment interests in a hospital. A “specialty hospital” does not include any hospital—

(1) Determined by the Secretary to be in operation before or under development as of November 18, 2003;

(2) For which the number of physician investors at any time on or after such date is no greater than the number of such investors as of such date;

(3) For which the type of categories described above is no different at any time on or after such date than the type of such categories as of such date;

(4) For which any increase in the number of beds occurs only in the facilities on the main campus of the hospital and does not exceed 50 percent of the number of beds in the hospital as of November 18, 2003, or 5 beds, whichever is greater; and

(5) That meets such other requirements as the Secretary may specify.

Transaction means an instance or process of two or more persons or entities doing business. An isolated financial transaction means one involving a single payment between two or more persons or entities or a transaction that involves integrally related installment payments provided that—

(1) The total aggregate payment is fixed before the first payment is made and does not take into account, directly or indirectly, the volume or value of referrals or other business generated by the referring physician; and

(2) The payments are immediately negotiable or are guaranteed by a third party, or secured by a negotiable promissory note, or subject to a similar mechanism to ensure payment even in the event of default by the purchaser or obligated party.

[72 FR 51080, Sept. 5, 2007, as amended at 72 FR 66400, 66930, Nov. 27, 2007; 73 FR 48751, Aug. 19, 2008; 73 FR 69934, Nov. 19, 2008]

§ 411.352 Group practice.

For purposes of this subpart, a group practice is a physician practice that meets the following conditions:

(a) *Single legal entity.* The group practice must consist of a single legal entity operating primarily for the purpose of being a physician group practice in any organizational form recognized by the State in which the group practice achieves its legal status, including, but not limited to, a partnership, professional corporation, limited liability company, foundation, nonprofit corporation, faculty practice plan, or similar association. The single legal entity may be organized by any party or parties, including, but not limited to, physicians, health care facilities, or other persons or entities (including, but not limited to, physicians individually incorporated as professional corporations). The single legal entity may be organized or owned (in whole or in part) by another medical practice, provided that the other medical practice is not an operating physician practice (and regardless of whether the medical practice meets the conditions for a group practice under this section). For purposes of this subpart, a single legal entity does not include informal affiliations of physicians formed substantially to share profits from referrals, or separate group practices under common ownership or control through a physician practice management company, hospital, health system, or other entity or organization. A group practice that is otherwise a single legal entity may itself own subsidiary entities. A group practice operating in more than one State will be considered to be a single legal entity notwithstanding that it is composed of multiple legal entities, provided that—

(1) The States in which the group practice is operating are contiguous (although each State need not be contiguous to every other State);

(2) The legal entities are absolutely identical as to ownership, governance, and operation; and

(3) Organization of the group practice into multiple entities is necessary to comply with jurisdictional licensing laws of the States in which the group practice operates.

(b) *Physicians.* The group practice must have at least two physicians who are members of the group (whether employees or direct or indirect owners), as defined at § 411.351.

(c) *Range of care.* Each physician who is a member of the group, as defined at §411.351, must furnish substantially the full range of patient care services that the physician routinely furnishes, including medical care, consultation, diagnosis, and treatment, through the joint use of shared office space, facilities, equipment, and personnel.

(d) *Services furnished by group practice members.* (1) Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (d)(3), (d)(4), (d)(5), and (d)(6) of this section, substantially all of the patient care services of the physicians who are members of the group (that is, at least 75 percent of the total patient care services of the group practice members) must be furnished through the group and billed under a billing number assigned to the group, and the amounts received must be treated as receipts of the group. *Patient care services* must be measured by one of the following:

(i) The total time each member spends on patient care services documented by any reasonable means (including, but not limited to, time cards, appointment schedules, or personal diaries). (For example, if a physician practices 40 hours a week and spends 30 hours a week on patient care services for a group practice, the physician has spent 75 percent of his or her time providing patient care services for the group.)

(ii) Any alternative measure that is reasonable, fixed in advance of the performance of the services being measured, uniformly applied over time, verifiable, and documented.

(2) The data used to calculate compliance with this *substantially all* test and related supportive documentation must be made available to the Secretary upon request.

(3) The *substantially all* test set forth in paragraph (d)(1) of this section does not apply to any group practice that is located solely in a HPSA, as defined at §411.351.

(4) For a group practice located outside of a HPSA (as defined at §411.351), any time spent by a group practice member providing services in a HPSA should not be used to calculate whether the group practice has met the *substantially all* test, regardless of whether the member's time in the HPSA is

spent in a group practice, clinic, or office setting.

(5) During the *start up* period (not to exceed 12 months) that begins on the date of the initial formation of a new group practice, a group practice must make a reasonable, good faith effort to ensure that the group practice complies with the *substantially all* test requirement set forth in paragraph (d)(1) of this section as soon as practicable, but no later than 12 months from the date of the initial formation of the group practice. This paragraph (d)(5) does not apply when an existing group practice admits a new member or reorganizes.

(6)(i) If the addition to an existing group practice of a new member who would be considered to have relocated his or her medical practice under §411.357(e)(2) would result in the existing group practice not meeting the *substantially all* test set forth in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, the group practice will have 12 months following the addition of the new member to come back into full compliance, provided that—

(A) For the 12-month period the group practice is fully compliant with the *substantially all* test if the new member is not counted as a member of the group for purposes of §411.352; and

(B) The new member's employment with, or ownership interest in, the group practice is documented in writing no later than the beginning of his or her new employment, ownership, or investment.

(ii) This paragraph (d)(6) does not apply when an existing group practice reorganizes or admits a new member who is not relocating his or her medical practice.

(e) *Distribution of expenses and income.* The overhead expenses of, and income from, the practice must be distributed according to methods that are determined before the receipt of payment for the services giving rise to the overhead expense or producing the income. Nothing in this section prevents a group practice from adjusting its compensation methodology prospectively, subject to restrictions on the distribution of revenue from DHS under §411.352(i).

(f) *Unified business.* (1) The group practice must be a unified business having at least the following features:

(i) Centralized decision-making by a body representative of the group practice that maintains effective control over the group's assets and liabilities (including, but not limited to, budgets, compensation, and salaries); and

(ii) Consolidated billing, accounting, and financial reporting.

(2) Location and specialty-based compensation practices are permitted with respect to revenues derived from services that are not DHS and may be permitted with respect to revenues derived from DHS under § 411.352(i).

(g) *Volume or value of referrals.* No physician who is a member of the group practice directly or indirectly receives compensation based on the volume or value of his or her referrals, except as provided in § 411.352(i).

(h) *Physician-patient encounters.* Members of the group must personally conduct no less than 75 percent of the physician-patient encounters of the group practice.

(i) *Special rule for productivity bonuses and profit shares.* (1) A physician in the group practice may be paid a share of overall profits of the group, provided that the share is not determined in any manner that is directly related to the volume or value of referrals of DHS by the physician. A physician in the group practice may be paid a productivity bonus based on services that he or she has personally performed, or services "incident to" such personally performed services, or both, provided that the bonus is not determined in any manner that is directly related to the volume or value of referrals of DHS by the physician (except that the bonus may directly relate to the volume or value of DHS referrals by the physician if the referrals are for services "incident to" the physician's personally performed services).

(2) Overall profits means the group's entire profits derived from DHS payable by Medicare or Medicaid or the profits derived from DHS payable by Medicare or Medicaid of any component of the group practice that consists of at least five physicians. Overall profits should be divided in a reasonable and verifiable manner that is not di-

rectly related to the volume or value of the physician's referrals of DHS. The share of overall profits will be deemed *not* to relate directly to the volume or value of referrals if *one* of the following conditions is met:

(i) The group's profits are divided per capita (for example, per member of the group or per physician in the group).

(ii) Revenues derived from DHS are distributed based on the distribution of the group practice's revenues attributed to services that are not DHS payable by any Federal health care program or private payer.

(iii) Revenues derived from DHS constitute less than 5 percent of the group practice's total revenues, and the allocated portion of those revenues to each physician in the group practice constitutes 5 percent or less of his or her total compensation from the group.

(3) A productivity bonus must be calculated in a reasonable and verifiable manner that is not directly related to the volume or value of the physician's referrals of DHS. A productivity bonus will be deemed not to relate directly to the volume or value of referrals of DHS if one of the following conditions is met:

(i) The bonus is based on the physician's total patient encounters or relative value units (RVUs). (The methodology for establishing RVUs is set forth in § 414.22 of this chapter.)

(ii) The bonus is based on the allocation of the physician's compensation attributable to services that are not DHS payable by any Federal health care program or private payer.

(iii) Revenues derived from DHS are less than 5 percent of the group practice's total revenues, and the allocated portion of those revenues to each physician in the group practice constitutes 5 percent or less of his or her total compensation from the group practice.

(4) Supporting documentation verifying the method used to calculate the profit share or productivity bonus under paragraphs (i)(2) and (i)(3) of this section, and the resulting amount of compensation, must be made available to the Secretary upon request.

[72 FR 51084, Sept. 5, 2007]