

The October 1994 notice required State Medicaid agencies to specify the reimbursement for the administration of the pediatric vaccines, and, if applicable, submit documentation of equal access, due by April 1 of each year, beginning April 1, 1995 (and which is effective July 1, 1995), as part of its obstetrical/pediatric payment rate State Medicaid plan amendment submittal. The notice also stated that if the State Medicaid agency elected to pay the maximum regional amount statewide, it need only specify this in its State plan amendment submittal (no additional documentation would have been needed). However, if the State Medicaid agency elected to vary the vaccine administration fee by geographic areas within the State, the State must list the administration fee, specify the methodology, and provide data for each geographic area where the maximum charges are not applied. Additionally, the notice stated that, because of the October 1, 1994 implementation date, the State plan amendment must have been submitted by December 31, 1994, and have been effective October 1, 1994. For the interim period of October 1, 1994, through March 31, 1995, the notice provided that States may claim Federal matching funds for the costs of administration of vaccines to Medicaid-eligible children using the maximum charges or lower fees established on the basis of the guidance provided in the notice. For this interim State plan amendment, the State would have been required to submit the methodology to document access to immunizations but would not have been required to supply supporting data by which Medicaid beneficiary access to immunizations was assured. Beginning April 1, 1995, documentation of equal access to immunizations would have been required to be included as part of the yearly obstetrical/pediatric State plan amendment submittal in accordance with section 1926 of the Social Security Act.

II. Rescission of Access Guidelines

As a result of our preliminary review of public comments on the October 1994 notice regarding the documentation of access requirements, we are rescinding the requirement that States use the access guidelines to provide assurances of equal access, pending further evaluation.

Following are some of the problems the commenters identified with the access requirements:

- Difficulties in obtaining current data on the number of children in the general population who have received

immunizations, despite the fact that States have data on the number of Medicaid children who have been immunized.

- Difficulties in obtaining private insurance information only on administration fee reimbursement. It is unlikely that private insurance companies will have a reimbursement rate that only covers the provider's costs for administration of the immunization.

- Difficulties in obtaining useable data currently. These problems stem from the fact that some States have not yet implemented the VFC Program for private providers.

- Difficulties in obtaining VFC Program reimbursement data. Due to the October 1, 1994, implementation date, most of the claims data that would be used to document access in April 1995 would reflect provider participation based on the current reimbursement system rather than reimbursement through the VFC program.

- Difficulties in obtaining reliable and meaningful measures of access. Commenters urged HCFA to develop meaningful measures of access for vaccines and for all other obstetrical and pediatric services.

As a result of the rescission of the access guidelines, States will not be required to provide a methodology or data to document that payment levels are sufficient to enlist enough providers so that immunizations under the State plan are available to Medicaid recipients at least to the extent that those services are available to the general population.

HCFA is forming a workgroup that will examine alternative measures of access to vaccines. After this examination is completed, we will evaluate the various suggestions of the group and formulate specific guidelines for States. These guidelines, along with responses to all other timely public comments on the October 3, 1994, notice, will be published in a final **Federal Register** document.

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12866, this notice has been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.778, Medical Assistance Program)

Dated: February 5, 1995.

Bruce C. Vladek,
Administrator, Health Care Financing Administration.

Dated: March 2, 1995.

Donna E. Shalala,
Secretary.

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Hearing Procedures for Certain Issues Related to the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment and the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant Programs

AGENCY: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: SAMHSA administers two block grant programs: the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant Program and the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) Block Grant Program, both of which are authorized by Title XIX of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act. Section 1945(e) of the PHS Act provides a State the opportunity for a hearing on certain noncompliance issues relating to the block grants prior to the Secretary taking final action against the State. To the extent that the hearing procedures contained in 45 CFR part 96, subpart E, 42 CFR part 50, subpart D, or 45 CFR part 16 do not apply to the noncompliance issue raised, the guidelines established below for hearings will apply to assist in providing a prompt and orderly hearing. When these procedures are applicable, the State will be provided a copy of the procedures with the notice of noncompliance.

These procedures are currently effective. However, we are inviting comments from the public on the procedures and such comments are to be sent to the information contact person identified immediately below within 60 days from the date of this publication. Comments received will be carefully considered and may cause the procedures to be revised.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Kopanda, Acting Executive Officer, SAMHSA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 12-105, Rockville, MD 20857, Telephone No. (301) 443-3875.

Hearing Procedures

Sec. 1. Limitations on Issues Subject to Review During the Hearing

The scope of review shall be limited to (a) the facts relevant to the noncompliance at issue, and (b) the necessary interpretations of those facts, any applicable regulations, and other relevant law. The legal validity of any regulations or statutes shall not be subject to review under these procedures.

Sec. 2. The Request for a Hearing and the Hearing Official's Response

(a) The State must submit a written notice to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) requesting a hearing within 15 days of the date of the notice of noncompliance (which will set forth the reasons for the finding of noncompliance and be accompanied by a copy of these hearing procedures), unless some other time period is agreed to by the parties. The written notice must be sent to (*name and address of person identified in the letter to the State*). The written notice requesting a hearing must include a copy of the notice of noncompliance and a brief statement of why the decision of noncompliance is wrong.

(b) Within ten days after receiving the request for review, SAMHSA will send an acknowledgment, identify the hearing official and advise the State of the next steps.

Sec. 3. The Procedures for Development of the Hearing File and Submission of Written Argument

The procedures for development and the submission of written argument are as follows:

(a) *State's documents and briefs.* Within 30 days after receiving the acknowledgment of the request for a hearing, the State shall submit to the hearing official the following (with a copy of SAMHSA at the address listed in sec. 2):

(1) A written statement, not to exceed 20 double-spaced pages, explaining why the Government's determination of noncompliance is wrong.

(2) A review file containing the documents supporting the State's argument, tabbed and reasonably organized, and accompanied by an index identifying each document. Only essential documents should be submitted to the hearing official.

(b) *SAMHSA's Documents and Brief.* Within 30 days after receiving the State's submission, SAMHSA shall submit to the hearing official the following (with a copy to the State):

(1) A written statement, not exceeding 20 double-spaced pages in length, responding to the State's brief.

(2) A review file containing documents supporting the Government's decision of noncompliance, tabbed and reasonably organized, and accompanied by an index identifying each document. Only essential documents should be submitted to the hearing official.

(c) *The State's Reply Brief.* Within 15 days after receiving SAMHSA's

submission, the State may submit a short reply not to exceed 10 double-spaced pages (with a copy to SAMHSA at the address listed in sec. 2).

Sec. 4. Opportunity for Oral Presentation

(a) *Electing Oral Presentation.* Either the Federal Government or the State may request the opportunity for an oral presentation by submitting such a request in writing to the hearing official on or before the date the State is to submit its reply brief under section 3(c). The hearing official will grant the request if the official determines that a genuine and substantial issue of fact has been raised by the material submitted and that the consideration of the issue will benefit from an oral presentation. The hearing official may also upon his or her initiative request an oral presentation by the parties.

(b) *Preliminary Conference.* The hearing official may hold a prehearing conference (usually a telephone conference call) to consider any of the following: Simplifying and clarifying issues; stipulations and admissions; limitations on evidence and witnesses that will be presented at the hearing; time allotted for each witness and the hearing altogether; scheduling the hearing; and any other matter that will assist in the review process. Normally, this conference will be conducted informally. The hearing official may, at his or her discretion, produce a written document summarizing the conference or transcribe the conference, either of which will be made a part of the record.

(c) *Time and Place of Oral Presentation.* The hearing official will attempt to schedule the oral presentation, if granted, within 30 days of the date of the last reply brief. The oral presentation will be held at a time and place determined by the hearing official following consultation with the parties.

(d) *Conduct of the Oral Presentation.*

(1) *General.* The hearing official is responsible for conducting the oral presentation. The hearing official may be assisted by one or more of his or her employees or consultants in conducting the oral presentation and hearing the evidence. While the oral presentation will be kept as informal as possible, the hearing official may take all necessary steps to ensure an orderly proceeding.

(2) *Admission of Evidence.* The formal rules of evidence do not apply and the hearing official will generally admit all testimonial evidence unless it is clearly irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious. Each party may make an opening and closing statement, may present witnesses as agreed upon in the

prehearing conference or otherwise, and may question the opposing party's witnesses. Since the parties have ample opportunity to prepare the review file, a party may introduce additional documentation during the oral presentation only with the permission of the hearing official. The hearing official may question witnesses directly and take such other steps necessary to ensure an effective and efficient consideration of the evidence, including setting time limitations on direct and cross-examinations.

(3) *Transcripts.* The hearing official may have the oral presentation transcribed and, if so transcribed, the transcript shall be made a part of the record. Either party may request a copy of the transcript and the requesting party shall be responsible for paying for its copy of the transcript.

(e) *Obstruction of Justice or Making of False Statements.* Obstruction of justice or the making of false statements by a witness or any other person may be the basis for a criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1505, 1001, or related statutes or regulations.

(f) *Post-hearing Procedures.* At his or her discretion, the hearing official may require or permit the parties to submit post-hearing briefs or proposed findings and conclusions. Each party may submit comments on any major prejudicial errors in the transcript.

Sec. 5. Burden of Proof

In all cases, the Government bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the State has not complied with the relevant provisions of the law. However, if a State is required to expend or otherwise account for money in a particular manner, the State shall have the burden of producing audible records to show how the money was spent or otherwise accounted for or there will be a presumption created that the State did not expend or otherwise account for the funds correctly.

Sec. 6. Ex Parte Communications

Except for minor or routine administrative and procedural matters, a party shall not communicate with the hearing official or his or her staff on the matter without notice to the other party. All written communications to the hearing official shall simultaneously be submitted to the other party.

Sec. 7. Transmission of Written Communications and Calculation of Deadlines

(a) Because of the importance of a timely review, all written communications are to be transmitted by facsimile or overnight express mail.

The date of transmission (for facsimile) or the day following mailing (for overnight mail) will be considered the date of receipt.

(b) In counting days, include Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. However, if a due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, then the due date is the next Federal working day.

Sec. 8. Appointment of and Authority and Responsibilities of Hearing Official

There shall only be one hearing official appointed to the case and that hearing official shall be appointed by the Administrator of SAMHSA. In addition to any other authority specified in these procedures, the hearing official shall have the authority to issue orders; examine witnesses; take all steps necessary for the conduct of an orderly hearing; rule on requests and motions; grant extensions of time for good reasons; dismiss for failure to meet deadlines or other requirements; order the parties to submit relevant information or witnesses; remand a case for further action by the respondent; waive or modify these procedures in a specific case, usually with notice to the parties; reconsider a decision where a party promptly alleges a clear error of fact or law; and to take any other action necessary to resolve disputes in accordance with the objectives of these procedures.

Sec. 9. Administrative Record

The administrative record of review consists of the review file including the government's notice and the State's request for a hearing; other submissions by the parties; transcripts or other records of any meetings, conference calls, or oral presentation; evidence submitted at the oral presentation; and orders and other documents issued by the hearing official.

Sec. 10. Written Recommendation

(a) *Issuance of Recommendation.* The hearing official shall issue a written recommendation on the case which will be transmitted to the Secretary for a final decision. The written recommendation will set forth the reasons for the recommendation and describe the basis therefore in the record. The hearing official will send a

copy of the recommendation to the State and SAMHSA.

(b) *Date of Recommendation.* The hearing official will attempt to issue his or her recommendation within 15 days of the date of the oral presentation, the date on which the transcript is received, or the date of the last submission by either party, whichever is later. If there is no oral presentation, the recommendation will normally be issued within 15 days of the date of receipt of the last reply brief. Once issued, the hearing official will immediately communicate the recommendation to each party.

Dated: March 28, 1995.

Nelba Chavez,

Administrator.

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BILLING CODE 4162-20-M

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

[Docket No. N-95-3910]

Office of Administration; Notice of Submissions of Proposed Information Collections to OMB

AGENCY: Office of Administration, HUD.

ACTION: Notices.

SUMMARY: The proposed information collection requirements described below have been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act. The Department is soliciting public comment on the subject proposals.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit comment regarding these proposals. Comments must be received within thirty (30) days from the date of this Notice. Comments should refer to the proposal by name and should be sent to: Joseph F. Lackey, Jr., OMB Desk Officer, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kay F. Weaver, Reports Management Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, Southwest, Washington, DC 20410,

telephone (202) 708-0050. This is not a toll-free number. Copies of the proposed forms and other available documents submitted to OMB may be obtained from Ms. Weaver.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department has submitted the proposals for the collections of information, as described below, to OMB for review, as required by the Paperwork Reduction act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

The Notices list the following information: (1) The title of the information collection proposal; (2) the office of the agency to collect the information; (3) the description of the need for the information and its proposed use; (4) the agency form number, if applicable; (5) what members of the public will be affected by the proposal; (6) an estimate of the total number of hours needed to prepare the information submission including number of respondents, frequency of response, and hours of response; (7) whether the proposal is new or an extension, reinstatement, or revision of an information collection requirement; and (8) the names and telephone numbers of an agency official familiar with the proposal and of the OMB Desk Officer for the Department.

Authority: Section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3507; Section 7(d) of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act, 42 U.S.C. 3535(d).

Dated: April 3, 1995.

David S. Cristy,

Acting Director, Information Resources, Management Policy and Management Division.

Notice of Submission of Proposed Information Collection to OMB

Proposal: Financial Statement.

Office: Housing.

Description Of The Need For The Information And Its Proposed Use: This form is used by HUD in determining factors involved when compromises are reached with borrowers to lighten the financial burdens in given cases of Title I Home Improvement and Mobile Home Loans.

Form Number: HUD-56142.

Respondents: Individuals or Households.

Reporting Burden:

	Number of respondents	×	Frequency of response	×	Hours per response	=	Burden hours
HUD-56142	1,258		1		1		1,258