

In accordance with § 422.158(b) of our regulations, the applicant must provide documentation relating to—

- Its ability to provide data in a CMS-compatible format;
- The adequacy of personnel and other resources necessary to perform the required surveys and other activities; and
- Assurances that it will comply with ongoing responsibility requirements specified in § 422.157(c) of our regulations.

In accordance with section 1865(b)(3)(A) of the Act, the proposed notice also solicited public comment on the ability of the NCQA's accreditation program to meet or exceed the Medicare requirements for which it seeks authority to deem. We did not receive any public comment in response to the proposed notice.

#### IV. Provisions of the Final Notice

On August 4, 2004, NCQA submitted all the necessary information to permit us to make a determination concerning its request for approval as a deeming authority for MA organizations that are licensed as a PPO.

We compared the standards contained in NCQA's PPO crosswalk and its survey process with the Medicare regulations and the PPO survey monitoring guide. Our review and evaluation of NCQA's deeming application determined that the NCQA standards meet or exceed those established by the Medicare program. Therefore, we recognize NCQA as a national accreditation organization for local preferred provider organizations that wish to participate in the Medicare Advantage program, effective October 20, 2004 through October 20, 2010.

#### V. Collection of Information Requirements

This final notice does not impose any information collection and record keeping requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). Consequently, it does not need to be reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the authority of the PRA.

#### VI. Executive Order 12866 Statement

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12866, this notice was not reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

**Authority:** Sections 1852 and 1865 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-23 and

1395bb) (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.773, Medicare—Hospital Insurance; and Program No. 93.774, Medicare—Supplementary Medical Insurance Program)

Dated: November 24, 2004.

**Mark B. McClellan,**

*Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.*

[FR Doc. 04-28154 Filed 12-29-04; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4120-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

[CMS-1249-CN2]

RIN 0938-AM46

#### Medicare Program; Prospective Payment System and Consolidated Billing for Skilled Nursing Facilities; Corrections

**AGENCY:** Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), HHS.

**ACTION:** Correction notice.

**SUMMARY:** This document corrects technical errors that appeared in the July 30, 2004 **Federal Register**, entitled "Medicare Program; Prospective Payment System and Consolidated Billing for Skilled Nursing Facilities—Update—Notice."

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This correction is effective October 1, 2004, except for certain wage index corrections that are effective January 1, 2005.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jeanette Kranacs, (410) 786-9385, Bill Ullman, (410) 786-5667, or Sheila Lambowitz, (410) 786-7605.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Background

On October 7, 2004, we published a correction notice (FR Doc. 04-22399, 69 FR 60158) to correct a number of technical errors that had appeared in the FY 2005 SNF PPS update notice published on July 30, 2004 (FR Doc. 04-17443, 69 FR 45775). In that notice we indicated that the corrected wage tables and other tables were being posted on the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/snfpps>, and we also expressed our intent to publish them in a forthcoming **Federal Register** notice. In this notice we are fulfilling that intent, as well as correcting certain

additional technical errors in wage index values that have been recently identified. The corrections appear in this document under the heading "Correction of Errors." The provisions in this correction notice are effective as if they had been included in the document published in the **Federal Register** on July 30, 2004, that is, as of October 1, 2004, except for those wage index value corrections that we specifically note to be effective as of January 1, 2005.

In this notice, we hereby set forth the corrected versions of Tables 8, 9, 10, and 12 that were referenced in FR Doc. 04-22399 (69 FR 60158).

In addition, Table 8 is further revised to reflect the following additional corrections, which become effective as of January 1, 2005:

1. The entry of "0.7959" for Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) 3960 (Lake Charles, LA) is revised by adding "(0.7972, effective January 1, 2005)".

2. The entry of "0.8053" for MSA 4280 (Lexington, KY) is revised by adding "(0.9219, effective January 1, 2005)".

3. The entry of "1.0025" for MSA 5000 (Miami, FL) is revised by adding "(0.9870, effective January 1, 2005)".

4. The entry of "1.2921" for MSA 5380 (Nassau-Suffolk, NY) is revised by adding "(1.2907, effective January 1, 2005)".

5. The entry of "1.3587" for MSA 5600 (New York, NY) is revised by adding "(1.3586, effective January 1, 2005)".

6. The entry of "1.0975" for MSA 6780 (Riverside-San Bernardino, CA) is revised by adding "(1.0970, effective January 1, 2005)".

7. The entry of "0.9964" for MSA 8780 (Visalia-Tulare-Porterville, CA) is revised by adding "(0.9975, effective January 1, 2005)".

8. The entry of "1.0059" for MSA 8960 (West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL) is revised by adding "(1.0362, effective January 1, 2005)".

9. The entry of "0.9472" for MSA 9040 (Wichita, KS) is revised by adding "(0.9468, effective January 1, 2005)".

##### II. Correction of Errors

In FR Doc. 04-17443 (69 FR 45775), make the following corrections:

1. On pages 45787 through 45814, in Table 8—Wage Index for Rural Areas the table is corrected to read as follows:

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
0040	Abilene, TX	0.8009
	Taylor, TX	
0060	Aguadilla, PR	0.4294
	Aguada, PR	
	Aguadilla, PR	
	Moca, PR	
0080	Akron, OH	0.9055
	Portage, OH	
	Summit, OH	
0120	Albany, GA	1.1266
	Dougherty, GA	
	Lee, GA	
0160	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	0.8570
	Albany, NY	
	Montgomery, NY	
	Rensselaer, NY	
	Saratoga, NY	
	Schenectady, NY	
	Schoharie, NY	
0200	Albuquerque, NM	1.0485
	Bernalillo, NM	
	Sandoval, NM	
	Valencia, NM	
0220	Alexandria, LA	0.8171
	Rapides, LA	
0240	Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA	0.9536
	Carbon, PA	
	Lehigh, PA	
	Northampton, PA	
0280	Altoona, PA	0.8462
	Blair, PA	
0320	Amarillo, TX	0.9178
	Potter, TX	
	Randall, TX	
0380	Anchorage, AK	1.2109
	Anchorage, AK	
0440	Ann Arbor, MI	1.0816
	Lenawee, MI	
	Livingston, MI	
	Washtenaw, MI	
0450	Anniston, AL	0.7881
	Calhoun, AL	
0460	Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah, WI	0.9115
	Calumet, WI	
	Outagamie, WI	
	Winnebago, WI	
0470	Arecibo, PR	0.3757
	Arecibo, PR	
	Camuy, PR	
	Hatillo, PR	
0480	Asheville, NC	0.9501
	Buncombe, NC	
	Madison, NC	
0500	Athens, GA	1.0202
	Clarke, GA	
	Madison, GA	
	Oconee, GA	
0520	Atlanta, GA	0.9971
	Barrow, GA	
	Bartow, GA	
	Carroll, GA	
	Cherokee, GA	
	Clayton, GA	
	Cobb, GA	
	Coweta, GA	
	De Kalb, GA	
	Douglas, GA	
	Fayette, GA	
	Forsyth, GA	
	Fulton, GA	
	Gwinnett, GA	
	Henry, GA	

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
	Newton, GA	
	Paulding, GA	
	Pickens, GA	
	Rockdale, GA	
	Spalding, GA	
	Walton, GA	
0560	Atlantic City-Cape May, NJ	1.0907
	Atlantic City, NJ	
	Cape May, NJ	
0580	Auburn-Opelika, AL	0.8215
	Lee, AL	
0600	Augusta-Aiken, GA-SC	0.9208
	Columbia, GA	
	McDuffie, GA	
	Richmond, GA	
	Aiken, SC	
	Edgefield, SC	
0640	Austin-San Marcos, TX	0.9595
	Bastrop, TX	
	Caldwell, TX	
	Hays, TX	
	Travis, TX	
	Williamson, TX	
0680	Bakersfield, CA	1.0036
	Kern, CA	
0720	Baltimore, MD	0.9907
	Anne Arundel, MD	
	Baltimore, MD	
	Baltimore City, MD	
	Carroll, MD	
	Harford, MD	
	Howard, MD	
	Queen Annes, MD	
0733	Bangor, ME	0.9955
	Penobscot, ME	
0743	Barnstable-Yarmouth, MA	1.2335
	Barnstable, MA	
0760	Baton Rouge, LA	0.8354
	Ascension, LA	
	East Baton Rouge	
	Livingston, LA	
	West Baton Rouge, LA	
0840	Beaumont-Port Arthur, TX	0.8616
	Hardin, TX	
	Jefferson, TX	
	Orange, TX	
0860	Bellingham, WA	1.1642
	Whatcom, WA	
0870	Benton Harbor, MI	0.8847
	Berrien, MI	
0875	Bergen-Passaic, NJ	1.1967
	Bergen, NJ	
	Passaic, NJ	
0880	Billings, MT	0.8961
	Yellowstone, MT	
0920	Biloxi-Gulfport-Pascagoula, MS	0.8649
	Hancock, MS	
	Harrison, MS	
	Jackson, MS	
0960	Binghamton, NY	0.8447
	Broome, NY	
	Tioga, NY	
1000	Birmingham, AL	0.9198
	Blount, AL	
	Jefferson, AL	
	St. Clair, AL	
	Shelby, AL	
1010	Bismarck, ND	0.7505
	Burleigh, ND	
	Morton, ND	
1020	Bloomington, IN	0.8587
	Monroe, IN	

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
1040	Bloomington-Normal, IL	0.9111
	McLean, IL	
1080	Boise City, ID	0.9352
	Ada, ID	
	Canyon, ID	
1123	Boston-Worcester-Lawrence-Lowell-Brockton, MA-NH	1.1290
	Bristol, MA	
	Essex, MA	
	Middlesex, MA	
	Norfolk, MA	
	Plymouth, MA	
	Suffolk, MA	
	Worcester, MA	
	Hillsborough, NH	
	Merrimack, NH	
	Rockingham, NH	
	Strafford, NH	
1125	Boulder-Longmont, CO	1.0046
	Boulder, CO	
1145	Brazoria, TX	0.8524
	Brazoria, TX	
1150	Bremerton, WA	1.0614
	Kitsap, WA	
1240	Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito, TX	1.0125
	Cameron, TX	
1260	Bryan-College Station, TX	0.9243
	Brazos, TX	
1280	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	0.9339
	Erie, NY	
	Niagara, NY	
1303	Burlington, VT	0.9322
	Chittenden, VT	
	Franklin, VT	
	Grand Isle, VT	
1310	Caguas, PR	0.4061
	Caguas, PR	
	Cayey, PR	
	Cidra, PR	
	Gurabo, PR	
	San Lorenzo, PR	
1320	Canton-Massillon, OH	0.8895
	Carroll, OH	
	Stark, OH	
1350	Casper, WY	0.9243
	Natrona, WY	
1360	Cedar Rapids, IA	0.8975
	Linn, IA	
1400	Champaign-Urbana, IL	0.9527
	Champaign, IL	
1440	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	0.9420
	Berkeley, SC	
	Charleston, SC	
	Dorchester, SC	
1480	Charleston, WV	0.8876
	Kanawha, WV	
	Putnam, WV	
1520	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	0.9711
	Cabarrus, NC	
	Gaston, NC	
	Lincoln, NC	
	Mecklenburg, NC	
	Rowan, NC	
	Union, NC	
	York, SC	
1540	Charlottesville, VA	1.0294
	Albemarle, VA	
	Charlottesville City, VA	
	Fluvanna, VA	
	Greene, VA	
1560	Chattanooga, TN-GA	0.9207
	Catoosa, GA	
	Dade, GA	

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
1580	Walker, GA Hamilton, TN Marion, TN Cheyenne, WY	0.8980
1600	Laramie, WY Chicago, IL	1.0851
1620	Cook, IL De Kalb, IL Du Page, IL Grundy, IL Kane, IL Kendall, IL Lake, IL McHenry, IL Will, IL Chico-Paradise, CA	1.0542
1640	Butte, CA Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN Dearborn, IN Ohio, IN Boone, KY Campbell, KY Gallatin, KY Grant, KY Kenton, KY Pendleton, KY Brown, OH Clermont, OH Hamilton, OH Warren, OH	0.9595
1660	Clarksville-Hopkinsville, TN-KY Christian, KY Montgomery, TN	0.8022
1680	Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria, OH Ashtabula, OH Geauga, OH Cuyahoga, OH Lake, OH Lorain, OH Medina, OH	0.9626
1720	Colorado Springs, CO	0.9792
1740	El Paso, CO Columbia MO	0.8396
1760	Boone, MO Columbia, SC Lexington, SC Richland, SC	0.9450
1800	Columbus, GA-AL Russell, AL Chattahoochee, GA Harris, GA Muscogee, GA	0.8690
1840	Columbus, OH Delaware, OH Fairfield, OH Franklin, OH Licking, OH Madison, OH Pickaway, OH	0.9753
1880	Corpus Christi, TX Nueces, TX San Patricio, TX	0.8647
1890	Corvallis, OR Benton, OR	1.0545
1900	Cumberland, MD-WV	0.8662
1920	Allegany MD Mineral WV Dallas, TX Collin, TX Dallas, TX Denton, TX Ellis, TX	1.0054

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
1950	Henderson, TX Hunt, TX Kaufman, TX Rockwall, TX Danville, VA .....	0.8643
1960	Danville City, VA Pittsylvania, VA Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL .....	0.8773
2000	Scott, IA Henry, IL Rock Island, IL Dayton-Springfield, OH .....	0.9231
2020	Clark, OH Greene, OH Miami, OH Montgomery, OH Daytona Beach, FL .....	0.8900
2030	Flagler, FL Volusia, FL Decatur, AL .....	0.8894
2040	Lawrence, AL Morgan, AL Decatur, IL .....	0.8122
2080	Macon, IL Denver, CO .....	1.0904
2120	Adams, CO Arapahoe, CO Broomfield, CO Denver, CO Douglas, CO Jefferson, CO Des Moines, IA .....	0.9266
2160	Dallas, IA Polk, IA Warren, IA Detroit, MI .....	1.0227
2180	Lapeer, MI Macomb, MI Monroe, MI Oakland, MI St. Clair, MI Wayne, MI Dothan, AL .....	0.7596
2190	Dale, AL Houston, AL Dover, DE .....	0.9825
2200	Kent, DE Dubuque, IA .....	0.8748
2240	Dubuque, IA Duluth-Superior, MN-WI .....	1.0356
2281	St. Louis, MN Douglas, WI Dutchess County, NY .....	1.1657
2290	Dutchess, NY Eau Claire, WI .....	0.9139
2320	Chippewa, WI Eau Claire, WI El Paso, TX .....	0.9181
2330	El Paso, TX Elkhart-Goshen, IN .....	0.9278
2335	Elkhart, IN Elmira, NY .....	0.8445
2340	Chemung, NY Enid, OK .....	0.9001
2360	Garfield, OK Erie, PA .....	0.8699
2400	Erie, PA Eugene-Springfield, OR .....	1.0940
2440	Lane, OR Evansville-Henderson, IN-KY .....	0.8395
	Posey, IN Vanderburgh, IN	

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
2520	Warrick, IN Henderson, KY Fargo-Moorhead, ND-MN Clay, MN Cass, ND	0.9114
2560	Fayetteville, NC Cumberland, NC	0.9363
2580	Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Benton, AR	0.8636
2620	Washington, AR Flagstaff, AZ-UT Coconino, AZ Kane, UT	1.0611
2640	Flint, MI	1.1178
2650	Genesee, MI Florence, AL Colbert, AL Lauderdale, AL	0.7883
2655	Florence, SC	0.8960
2670	Florence, SC Fort Collins-Loveland, CO Larimer, CO	1.0218
2680	Ft. Lauderdale, FL Broward, FL	1.0165
2700	Fort Myers-Cape Coral, FL Lee, FL	0.9371
2710	Fort Pierce-Port St. Lucie, FL Martin, FL St. Lucie, FL	1.0046
2720	Fort Smith, AR-OK Crawford, AR Sebastian, AR Sequoyah, OK	0.8303
2750	Fort Walton Beach, FL Okaloosa, FL	0.8786
2760	Fort Wayne, IN Adams, IN Allen, IN De Kalb, IN Huntington, IN Wells, IN Whitley, IN	0.9737
2800	Forth Worth-Arlington, TX Hood, TX Johnson, TX Parker, TX Tarrant, TX	0.9520
2840	Fresno, CA Fresno, CA Madera, CA	1.0407
2880	Gadsden, AL Etowah, AL	0.8049
2900	Gainesville, FL Alachua, FL	0.9459
2920	Galveston-Texas City, TX Galveston, TX	0.9403
2960	Gary, IN Lake, IN Porter, IN	0.9342
2975	Glens Falls, NY Warren, NY Washington, NY	0.8467
2980	Goldsboro, NC Wayne, NC	0.8778
2985	Grand Forks, ND-MN Polk, MN	0.9091
2995	Grand Forks, ND Grand Junction, CO Mesa, CO	0.9900
3000	Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI Allegan, MI Kent, MI	0.9519

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
3040	Muskegon, MI Ottawa, MI Great Falls, MT	0.8810
3060	Cascade, MT Greeley, CO	0.9444
3080	Weld, CO Green Bay, WI	0.9586
3120	Brown, WI Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point, NC	0.9312
3150	Alamance, NC Davidson, NC Davie, NC Forsyth, NC Guilford, NC Randolph, NC Stokes, NC Yadkin, NC Greenville, NC	0.9183
3160	Pitt, NC Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC	0.9400
3180	Anderson, SC Cherokee, SC Greenville, SC Pickens, SC Spartanburg, SC Hagerstown, MD	0.9940
3200	Washington, MD Hamilton-Middletown, OH	0.9066
3240	Butler, OH Harrisburg-Lebanon-Carlisle, PA	0.9286
3283	Cumberland, PA Dauphin, PA Lebanon, PA Perry, PA Hartford, CT	1.1054
3285	Hartford, CT Litchfield, CT Middlesex, CT Tolland, CT Hattiesburg, MS	0.7362
3290	Forrest, MS Lamar, MS Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir, NC	0.9502
3320	Alexander, NC Burke, NC Caldwell, NC Catawba, NC Honolulu, HI	1.1013
3350	Honolulu, HI Houma, LA	0.7721
3360	Lafourche, LA Terrebonne, LA Houston, TX	1.0117
3400	Chambers, TX Fort Bend, TX Harris, TX Liberty, TX Montgomery, TX Waller, TX Huntington-Ashland, WV-KY-OH	0.9564
3440	Boyd, KY Carter, KY Greenup, KY Lawrence, OH Cabell, WV Wayne, WV Huntsville, AL	0.8851
3480	Limestone, AL Madison, AL Indianapolis, IN	1.0039
	Boone, IN Hamilton, IN	



TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
	Hancock, IN	
	Hendricks, IN	
	Johnson, IN	
	Madison, IN	
	Marion, IN	
	Morgan, IN	
	Shelby, IN	
3500 .....	Iowa City, IA .....	0.9654
	Johnson, IA .....	
3520 .....	Jackson, MI .....	0.9146
	Jackson, MI .....	
3560 .....	Jackson, MS .....	0.8406
	Hinds, MS	
	Madison, MS	
	Rankin, MS	
3580 .....	Jackson, TN .....	0.8900
	Chester, TN	
	Madison, TN	
3600 .....	Jacksonville, FL .....	0.9548
	Clay, FL	
	Duval, FL	
	Nassau, FL	
	St. Johns, FL	
3605 .....	Jacksonville, NC .....	0.8401
	Onslow, NC	
3610 .....	Jamestown, NY .....	0.7589
	Chautauqua, NY	
3620 .....	Janesville-Beloit, WI .....	0.9583
	Rock, WI	
3640 .....	Jersey City, NJ .....	1.0923
	Hudson, NJ	
3660 .....	Johnson City-Kingsport-Bristol, TN-VA .....	0.8202
	Carter, TN	
	Hawkins, TN	
	Sullivan, TN	
	Unicoi, TN	
	Washington, TN	
	Bristol City, VA	
	Scott, VA	
	Washington, VA	
3680 .....	Johnstown, PA .....	0.7980
	Cambria, PA	
	Somerset, PA	
3700 .....	Jonesboro, AR .....	0.8144
	Craighead, AR	
3710 .....	Joplin, MO .....	0.8721
	Jasper, MO	
	Newton, MO	
3720 .....	Kalamazoo-Battlecreek, MI .....	1.0350
	Calhoun, MI	
	Kalamazoo, MI	
	Van Buren, MI	
3740 .....	Kankakee, IL .....	1.0603
	Kankakee, IL	
3760 .....	Kansas City, KS-MO .....	0.9641
	Johnson, KS	
	Leavenworth, KS	
	Miami, KS	
	Wyandotte, KS	
	Cass, MO	
	Clay, MO	
	Clinton, MO	
	Jackson, MO	
	Lafayette, MO	
	Platte, MO	
	Ray, MO	
3800 .....	Kenosha, WI .....	0.9772
	Kenosha, WI	
3810 .....	Killeen-Temple, TX .....	0.9242
	Bell, TX	
	Coryell, TX	
3840 .....	Knoxville, TN .....	0.8508

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
	Anderson, TN	
	Blount, TN	
	Knox, TN	
	Loudon, TN	
	Sevier, TN	
	Union, TN	
3850	Kokomo, IN	0.8986
	Howard, IN	
	Tipton, IN	
3870	La Crosse, WI-MN	0.9289
	Houston, MN	
	La Crosse, WI	
3880	Lafayette, LA	0.8105
	Acadia, LA	
	Lafayette, LA	
	St. Landry, LA	
	St. Martin, LA	
3920	Lafayette, IN	0.9067
	Clinton, IN	
	Tippecanoe, IN	
3960	Lake Charles, LA	0.7959 (0.7972**)
	Calcasieu, LA	
3980	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	0.8930
	Polk, FL	
4000	Lancaster, PA	0.9883
	Lancaster, PA	
4040	Lansing-East Lansing, MI	0.9658
	Clinton, MI	
	Eaton, MI	
	Ingham, MI	
4080	Laredo, TX	0.8747
	Webb, TX	
4100	Las Cruces, NM	0.8784
	Dona Ana, NM	
4120	Las Vegas, NV-AZ	1.1121
	Mohave, AZ	
	Clark, NV	
	Nye, NV	
4150	Lawrence, KS	0.8644
	Douglas, KS	
4200	Lawton, OK	0.8212
	Comanche, OK	
4243	Lewiston-Auburn, ME	0.9562
	Androscoggin, ME	
4280	Lexington, KY	0.8053 (0.9219**)
	Bourbon, KY	
	Clark, KY	
	Fayette, KY	
	Jessamine, KY	
	Madison, KY	
	Scott, KY	
	Woodford, KY	
4320	Lima, OH	0.9258
	Allen, OH	
	Auglaize, OH	
4360	Lincoln, NE	1.0208
	Lancaster, NE	
4400	Little Rock-North Little, AR	0.8826
	Faulkner, AR	
	Lonoke, AR	
	Pulaski, AR	
	Saline, AR	
4420	Longview-Marshall, TX	0.8739
	Gregg, TX	
	Harrison, TX	
	Upshur, TX	
4480	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	1.1732
	Los Angeles, CA	
4520	Louisville, KY-IN	0.9162
	Clark, IN	
	Floyd, IN	
	Harrison, IN	

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
	Scott, IN	
	Bullitt, KY	
	Jefferson, KY	
	Oldham, KY	
4600 .....	Lubbock, TX .....	0.8777
	Lubbock, TX	
4640 .....	Lynchburg, VA .....	0.9017
	Amherst, VA	
	Bedford City, VA	
	Bedford, VA	
	Campbell, VA	
	Lynchburg City, VA	
4680 .....	Macon, GA .....	0.9596
	Bibb, GA	
	Houston, GA	
	Jones, GA	
	Peach, GA	
	Twiggs, GA	
4720 .....	Madison, WI .....	1.0395
	Dane, WI	
4800 .....	Mansfield, OH .....	0.9105
	Crawford, OH	
	Richland, OH	
4840 .....	Mayaguez, PR .....	0.4769
	Anasco, PR	
	Cabo Rojo, PR	
	Hormigueros, PR	
	Mayaguez, PR	
	Sabana Grande, PR	
	San German, PR	
4880 .....	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX .....	0.8602
	Hidalgo, TX	
4890 .....	Medford-Ashland, OR .....	1.0534
	Jackson, OR	
4900 .....	Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay, FL .....	0.9633
	Brevard, FL	
4920 .....	Memphis, TN-AR-MS .....	0.9234
	Crittenden, AR	
	De Soto, MS	
	Fayette, TN	
	Shelby, TN	
	Tipton, TN	
4940 .....	Merced, CA .....	1.0575
	Merced, CA	
5000 .....	Miami, FL .....	1.0025 (0.9870**)
	Dade, FL	
5015 .....	Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ .....	1.1360
	Hunterdon, NJ	
	Middlesex, NJ	
	Somerset, NJ	
5080 .....	Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI .....	1.0076
	Milwaukee, WI	
	Ozaukee, WI	
	Washington, WI	
	Waukesha, WI	
5120 .....	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI .....	1.1066
	Anoka, MN	
	Carver, MN	
	Chisago, MN	
	Dakota, MN	
	Hennepin, MN	
	Isanti, MN	
	Ramsey, MN	
	Scott, MN	
	Sherburne, MN	
	Washington, MN	
	Wright, MN	
	Pierce, WI	
	St. Croix, WI	
5140 .....	Missoula, MT .....	0.9618
	Missoula, MT	
5160 .....	Mobile, AL .....	0.7932

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
5170	Baldwin, AL Mobile, AL Modesto, CA Stanislaus, CA	1.1966
5190	Monmouth-Ocean, NJ Monmouth, NJ Ocean, NJ	1.0888
5200	Monroe, LA	0.7913
5240	Ouachita, LA Montgomery, AL	0.8300
5280	Autauga, AL Elmore, AL Montgomery, AL Muncie, IN Delaware, IN	0.8580
5330	Myrtle Beach, SC Horry, SC	0.9022
5345	Naples, FL	1.0558
5360	Collier, FL Nashville, TN Cheatham, TN Davidson, TN Dickson, TN Robertson, TN Rutherford, TN Sumner, TN Williamson, TN Wilson, TN	1.0108
5380	Nassau-Suffolk, NY Nassau, NY Suffolk, NY	1.2921 (1.2907**)
5483	New Haven-Bridgeport-Stamford-Waterbury-Danbury, CT Fairfield, CT New Haven, CT	1.2254
5523	New London-Norwich, CT New London, CT	1.1596
5560	New Orleans, LA Jefferson, LA Orleans, LA Plaquemines, LA St. Bernard, LA St. Charles, LA St. James, LA St. John The Baptist, LA St. Tammany, LA	0.9103
5600	New York, NY Bronx, NY Kings, NY New York, NY Putnam, NY Queens, NY Richmond, NY Rockland, NY Westchester, NY	1.3587 (1.3586**)
5640	Newark, NJ Essex, NJ Morris, NJ Sussex, NJ Union, NJ Warren, NJ	1.1625
5660	Newburgh, NY-PA Orange, NY Pike, PA	1.1170
5720	Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA-NC Currituck, NC Chesapeake City, VA Gloucester, VA Hampton City, VA Isle of Wight, VA James City, VA Mathews, VA Newport News City, VA	0.8894

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
	Norfolk City, VA Poquoson City, VA Portsmouth City, VA Suffolk City, VA Virginia Beach City, VA Williamsburg City, VA York, VA	
5775	Oakland, CA	1.5220
	Alameda, CA Contra Costa, CA	
5790	Ocala, FL	0.9153
	Marion, FL	
5800	Odessa-Midland, TX	0.9632
	Ector, TX Midland, TX	
5880	Oklahoma City, OK	0.8966
	Canadian, OK Cleveland, OK Logan, OK McClain, OK Oklahoma, OK Pottawatomie, OK	
5910	Olympia, WA	1.1006
	Thurston, WA	
5920	Omaha, NE-IA	0.9754
	Pottawattamie, IA Cass, NE Douglas, NE Sarpy, NE Washington, NE	
5945	Orange County, CA	1.1611
	Orange, CA	
5960	Orlando, FL	0.9742
	Lake, FL Orange, FL Osceola, FL Seminole, FL	
5990	Owensboro, KY	0.8434
	Daviess, KY	
6015	Panama City, FL	0.8124
	Bay, FL	
6020	Parkersburg-Marietta, WV-OH	0.8288
	Washington, OH Wood, WV	
6080	Pensacola, FL	0.8306
	Escambia, FL Santa Rosa, FL	
6120	Peoria-Pekin, IL	0.8886
	Peoria, IL Tazewell, IL Woodford, IL	
6160	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	1.0824
	Burlington, NJ Camden, NJ Gloucester, NJ Salem, NJ Bucks, PA Chester, PA Delaware, PA Montgomery, PA Philadelphia, PA	
6200	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	0.9982
	Maricopa, AZ Pinal, AZ	
6240	Pine Bluff, AR	0.8673
	Jefferson, AR	
6280	Pittsburgh, PA	0.8756
	Allegheny, PA Beaver, PA Butler, PA Fayette, PA Washington, PA	

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
6323	Westmoreland, PA Pittsfield, MA	1.0439
6340	Berkshire, MA Pocatello, ID	0.9601
6360	Bannock, ID Ponce, PR Guayanilla, PR Juana Diaz, PR Penuelas, PR Ponce, PR Villalba, PR Yauco, PR	0.4954
6403	Portland, ME Cumberland, ME Sagadahoc, ME York, ME	1.0112
6440	Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA Clackamas, OR Columbia, OR Multnomah, OR Washington, OR Yamhill, OR	1.1403
6483	Clark, WA Providence-Warwick-Pawtucket, RI Bristol, RI Kent, RI Newport, RI Providence, RI Washington, RI	1.1061
6520	Provo-Orem, UT Utah, UT	0.9613
6560	Pueblo, CO	0.8752
6580	Punta Gorda, FL Charlotte, FL	0.9441
6600	Racine, WI	0.9045
6640	Racine, WI Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC Chatham, NC Durham, NC Franklin, NC Johnston, NC Orange, NC Wake, NC	1.0258
6660	Rapid City, SD Pennington, SD	0.8912
6680	Reading, PA Berks, PA	0.9215
6690	Redding, CA Shasta, CA	1.1835
6720	Reno, NV Washoe, NV	1.0456
6740	Richland-Kennewick-Pasco, WA Benton, WA Franklin, WA	1.0520
6760	Richmond-Petersburg, VA Charles City County, VA Chesterfield, VA Colonial Heights City, VA Dinwiddie, VA Goochland, VA Hanover, VA Henrico, VA Hopewell City, VA New Kent, VA Petersburg City, VA Powhatan, VA Prince George, VA Richmond City, VA	0.9397
6780	Riverside-San Bernardino, CA Riverside, CA San Bernardino, CA	1.0975 (1.0970**)

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
6800	Roanoke, VA Botetourt, VA Roanoke, VA Roanoke City, VA Salem City, VA	0.8428
6820	Rochester, MN Olmsted, MN	1.1504
6840	Rochester, NY Genesee, NY Livingston, NY Monroe, NY Ontario, NY Orleans, NY Wayne, NY	0.9196
6880	Rockford, IL Boone, IL Ogle, IL Winnebago, IL	0.9626
6895	Rocky Mount, NC Edgecombe, NC Nash, NC	0.8998
6920	Sacramento, CA El Dorado, CA Placer, CA Sacramento, CA	1.1848
6960	Saginaw-Bay City-Midland, MI Bay, MI Midland, MI Saginaw, MI	0.9696
6980	St. Cloud, MN Benton, MN Stearns, MN	1.0215
7000	St. Joseph, MO Andrews, MO Buchanan, MO	1.0013
7040	St. Louis, MO-IL Clinton, IL Jersey, IL Madison, IL Monroe, IL St. Clair, IL Franklin, MO Jefferson, MO Lincoln, MO St. Charles, MO St. Louis, MO St. Louis City, MO Warren, MO Sullivan City, MO	0.9081
7080	Salem, OR Marion, OR Polk, OR	1.0556
7120	Salinas, CA Monterey, CA	1.3823
7160	Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT Davis, UT Salt Lake, UT Weber, UT	0.9487
7200	San Angelo, TX Tom Green, TX	0.8167
7240	San Antonio, TX Bexar, TX Comal, TX Guadalupe, TX Wilson, TX	0.9023
7320	San Diego, CA San Diego, CA	1.1267
7360	San Francisco, CA Marin, CA San Francisco, CA San Mateo, CA	1.4712
7400	San Jose, CA	1.4744

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
7440	Santa Clara, CA San Juan-Bayamon, PR Aguas Buenas, PR Barceloneta, PR Bayamon, PR Canovanas, PR Carolina, PR Catano, PR Ceiba, PR Comerio, PR Corozal, PR Dorado, PR Fajardo, PR Florida, PR Guaynabo, PR Humacao, PR Juncos, PR Los Piedras, PR Loiza, PR Luguillo, PR Manati, PR Morovis, PR Naguabo, PR Naranjito, PR Rio Grande, PR San Juan, PR Toa Alta, PR Toa Baja, PR Trujillo Alto, PR Vega Alta, PR Vega Baja, PR Yabucoa, PR	0.4802
7460	San Luis Obispo-Atascadero-Paso Robles, CA	1.1118
7480	San Luis Obispo, CA Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc, CA	1.0771
7485	Santa Barbara, CA Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA	1.4779
7490	Santa Cruz, CA Santa Fe, NM Los Alamos, NM	1.0590
7500	Santa Fe, NM Santa Rosa, CA Sonoma, CA	1.2961
7510	Sarasota-Bradenton, FL Manatee, FL Sarasota, FL	0.9629
7520	Savannah, GA Bryan, GA Chatham, GA Effingham, GA	0.9460
7560	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre--Hazleton, PA Columbia, PA Lackawanna, PA Luzerne, PA Wyoming, PA	0.8522
7600	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA Island, WA King, WA Snohomish, WA	1.1479
7610	Sharon, PA Mercer, PA	0.7881
7620	Sheboygan, WI Sheboygan, WI	0.8948
7640	Sherman-Denison, TX Grayson, TX	0.9617
7680	Shreveport-Bossier City, LA Bossier, LA Caddo, LA Webster, LA	0.9111
7720	Sioux City, IA-NE Woodbury, IA Dakota, NE	0.9094



TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
7760	Sioux Falls, SD	0.9441
	Lincoln, SD	
	Minnehaha, SD	
7800	South Bend, IN	0.9447
	St. Joseph, IN	
7840	Spokane, WA	1.0660
	Spokane, WA	
7880	Springfield, IL	0.8738
	Menard, IL	
	Sangamon, IL	
7920	Springfield, MO	0.8597
	Christian, MO	
	Greene, MO	
	Webster, MO	
8003	Springfield, MA	1.0173
	Hampden, MA	
	Hampshire, MA	
8050	State College, PA	0.8461
	Centre, PA	
8080	Steubenville-Weirton, OH-WV	0.8280
	Jefferson, OH	
	Brooke, WV	
	Hancock, WV	
8120	Stockton-Lodi, CA	1.0564
	San Joaquin, CA	
8140	Sumter, SC	0.8520
	Sumter, SC	
8160	Syracuse, NY	0.9394
	Cayuga, NY	
	Madison, NY	
	Onondaga, NY	
	Oswego, NY	
8200	Tacoma, WA	1.1078
	Pierce, WA	
8240	Tallahassee, FL	0.8655
	Gadsden, FL	
	Leon, FL	
8280	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	0.9024
	Hernando, FL	
	Hillsborough, FL	
	Pasco, FL	
	Pinellas, FL	
8320	Terre Haute, IN	0.8582
	Clay, IN	
	Vermillion, IN	
	Vigo, IN	
8360	Texarkana, AR-Texarkana, TX	0.8413
	Miller, AR	
	Bowie, TX	
8400	Toledo, OH	0.9524
	Fulton, OH	
	Lucas, OH	
	Wood, OH	
8440	Topeka, KS	0.8904
	Shawnee, KS	
8480	Trenton, NJ	1.0276
	Mercer, NJ	
8520	Tucson, AZ	0.8926
	Pima, AZ	
8560	Tulsa, OK	0.8729
	Creek, OK	
	Osage, OK	
	Rogers, OK	
	Tulsa, OK	
	Wagoner, OK	
8600	Tuscaloosa, AL	0.8440
	Tuscaloosa, AL	
8640	Tyler, TX	0.9502
	Smith, TX	
8680	Utica-Rome, NY	0.8295
	Herkimer, NY	
	Oneida, NY	

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
8720	Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA Napa, CA Solano, CA	1.3517
8735	Ventura, CA Ventura, CA	1.1105
8750	Victoria, TX Victoria, TX	0.8469
8760	Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton, NJ Cumberland, NJ	1.0573
8780	Visalia-Tulare-Porterville, CA Tulare, CA	0.9964 (0.9975**)
8800	Waco, TX McLennan, TX	0.8146
8840	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV District of Columbia, DC Calvert, MD Charles, MD Frederick, MD Montgomery, MD Prince Georges, MD Alexandria City, VA Arlington, VA Clarke, VA Culpepper, VA Fairfax, VA Fairfax City, VA Falls Church City, VA Fauquier, VA Fredericksburg City, VA King George, VA Loudoun, VA Manassas City, VA Manassas Park City, VA Prince William, VA Spotsylvania, VA Stafford, VA Warren, VA Berkeley, WV Jefferson, WV	1.0971
8920	Waterloo-Cedar Falls, IA Black Hawk, IA	0.8633
8940	Wausau, WI Marathon, WI	0.9570
8960	West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL Palm Beach, FL	1.0059 (1.0362**)
9000	Wheeling, OH-WV Belmont, OH Marshall, WV Ohio, WV	0.7449
9040	Wichita, KS Butler, KS Harvey, KS Sedgwick, KS	0.9472 (0.9468**)
9080	Wichita Falls, TX Archer, TX Wichita, TX	0.8395
9140	Williamsport, PA Lycoming, PA	0.8485
9160	Wilmington-Newark, DE-MD New Castle, DE Cecil, MD	1.1121
9200	Wilmington, NC New Hanover, NC Brunswick, NC	0.9237
9260	Yakima, WA Yakima, WA	1.0322
9270	Yolo, CA Yolo, CA	0.9378
9280	York, PA York, PA	0.9150
9320	Youngstown-Warren, OH Columbiana, OH	0.9517

TABLE 8.—WAGE INDEX FOR URBAN AREAS—Continued

MSA	Urban area (constituent counties or county equivalents)	Wage index
9340 .....	Mahoning, OH Trumbull, OH Yuba City, CA .....	1.0363
9360 .....	Sutter, CA Yuba, CA Yuma, AZ .....	0.8871
	Yuma, AZ	

\*\*Effective January 1, 2005

2. On page 45815, Table 9 is revised to read as follows:

TABLE 9.—WAGE INDEX FOR RURAL AREAS—Continued

TABLE 9.—WAGE INDEX FOR RURAL AREAS—Continued

TABLE 9.—WAGE INDEX FOR RURAL AREAS

TABLE 9.—WAGE INDEX FOR RURAL AREAS		TABLE 9.—WAGE INDEX FOR RURAL AREAS—Continued		TABLE 9.—WAGE INDEX FOR RURAL AREAS—Continued	
Nonurban area	Wage index	Nonurban area	Wage index	Nonurban area	Wage index
Alabama .....	0.7637	Kentucky .....	0.7844	Pennsylvania .....	0.8348
Alaska .....	1.1637	Louisiana .....	0.7290	Puerto Rico .....	0.4047
Arizona .....	0.9140	Maine .....	0.9039	Rhode Island <sup>1</sup> .....	.....
Arkansas .....	0.7703	Maryland .....	0.9179	South Carolina .....	0.8640
California .....	1.0297	Massachusetts .....	1.0216	South Dakota .....	0.8393
Colorado .....	0.9368	Michigan .....	0.8740	Tennessee .....	0.7876
Connecticut .....	1.1917	Minnesota .....	0.9339	Texas .....	0.7910
Delaware .....	0.9503	Mississippi .....	0.7583	Utah .....	0.8843
Florida .....	0.8721	Missouri .....	0.7829	Vermont .....	0.9375
Georgia .....	0.8247	Montana .....	0.8701	Virginia .....	0.8479
Guam .....	0.9611	Nebraska .....	0.9035	Virgin Islands .....	0.7456
Hawaii .....	1.0522	Nevada .....	0.9832	Washington .....	1.0072
Idaho .....	0.8826	New Hampshire .....	0.9940	West Virginia .....	0.8083
Illinois .....	0.8340	New Jersey <sup>1</sup> .....	.....	Wisconsin .....	0.9498
Indiana .....	0.8736	New Mexico .....	0.8529	Wyoming .....	0.9182
Iowa .....	0.8550	New York .....	0.8403		
Kansas .....	0.8087	North Carolina .....	0.8500		
		North Dakota .....	0.7743		
		Ohio .....	0.8759		
		Oklahoma .....	0.7537		
		Oregon .....	1.0049		

<sup>1</sup> All counties within the State are classified urban.

3. On page 45817, Table 10 is revised to read as follows:

TABLE 10.—SNF XYZ: LOCATED IN STATE COLLEGE, PA  
[Wage Index: 0.8461]

RUG Group	Labor	Wage index	Adj. labor	Non-labor	Adj. rate	Percent adjustment	Medicare days	Payment
RVC .....	\$274.56	0.8461	\$232.31	\$85.65	\$317.96	*\$339.26	14	\$4,750
RHA .....	\$212.18	0.8461	\$179.53	\$66.19	\$245.72	*\$262.18	16	\$4,195
CC2 .....	\$175.71	0.8461	\$148.67	\$54.82	\$203.49	**\$463.96	10	\$4,640
SSC .....	\$176.74	0.8461	\$149.54	\$55.13	\$204.67	***\$245.60	30	\$7,368
IA2 .....	\$119.84	0.8461	\$101.40	\$37.39	\$138.79	\$138.79	30	\$4,164
Total .....							100	\$25,117

\*Reflects a 6.7 percent adjustment from section 314 of the BIPA.

\*\*Reflects a 128 percent adjustment from section 511 of the MMA. Section 101(a) of the BBRA no longer applies because of the MMA section 511 adjustment.

\*\*\*Reflects a 20 percent adjustment from section 101(a) of the BBRA.

4. On page 45821, Table 12 is revised to read as follows:

TABLE 12.—PROJECTED IMPACT OF FY 2005 UPDATE TO THE SNF PPS

	Number of facilities	Wage index change	Total FY 2005 change
Total .....	15,252	0.0%	2.8%
Urban .....	10,016	0.0%	2.8%
Rural .....	5,236	0.0%	2.8%
Hospital based urban .....	984	0.1%	2.9%

TABLE 12.—PROJECTED IMPACT OF FY 2005 UPDATE TO THE SNF PPS—Continued

	Number of facilities	Wage index change	Total FY 2005 change
Freestanding urban .....	8,466	0.0%	2.8%
Hospital based rural .....	640	0.1%	2.9%
Freestanding rural .....	3,708	0.0%	2.8%
Urban by region:			
New England .....	913	-0.6%	2.2%
Middle Atlantic .....	1,526	-0.7%	2.1%
South Atlantic .....	1,610	0.3%	3.1%
East North Central .....	1,943	0.2%	3.0%
East South Central .....	456	0.0%	2.8%
West North Central .....	691	0.4%	3.2%
West South Central .....	965	0.8%	3.6%
Mountain .....	432	-0.4%	2.4%
Pacific .....	1,473	0.4%	3.2%
Rural by region:			
New England .....	149	0.4%	3.2%
Middle Atlantic .....	254	-0.4%	2.4%
South Atlantic .....	715	-0.3%	2.5%
East North Central .....	948	0.1%	2.9%
Central East South .....	595	-0.4%	2.4%
West North Central .....	1,220	0.5%	3.3%
West South Central .....	817	0.4%	3.2%
Mountain .....	330	-0.2%	2.6%
Pacific .....	208	0.0%	2.8%
Ownership:			
Government .....	712	0.0%	2.8%
Proprietary .....	9,457	0.0%	2.8%
Voluntary .....	3605	0.0%	2.8%

### III. Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking and Delayed Effective Date

We ordinarily publish a notice of proposed rulemaking in the **Federal Register** to provide a period for public comment before the provisions of a notice such as this take effect in accordance with section 553(b) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553(b)). We also ordinarily provide a 30-day delay in the effective date of the provisions of a notice in accordance with section 553(d) of the APA (5 U.S.C. 553(d)). However, we can waive both the notice and comment procedure and the 30-day delay in effective date if the Secretary finds, for good cause, that a notice and comment process is impracticable, unnecessary or contrary to the public interest, and incorporates a statement of the finding and the reasons therefore in the notice.

We find it unnecessary to undertake notice-and-comment rulemaking because this notice merely provides technical corrections to the regulations. We are not changing our payment methodology, but rather, are simply implementing correctly the payment methodology that we previously proposed, received comment on, and subsequently finalized. Thus, because the public has already had the opportunity to comment on the payment methodology being used to calculate

wage indexes, additional comment would be unnecessary.

Further, we believe a delayed effective date is unnecessary because this correction notice merely corrects inadvertent technical errors. Further, we believe imposing a 30-day delay in the effective date would be contrary to the public interest for SNF providers in the affected MSAs. We believe that it is imperative that these providers receive appropriate SNF PPS payments in as timely a manner as possible, and any delay in applying the appropriate wage index would be contrary to the public interest. Further, the changes noted above do not make any substantive changes to the SNF PPS payment methodology or underlying payment policies. Therefore, we find good cause to waive notice-and-comment procedures, as well as the 30-day delay in effective date.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.773, Medicare—Hospital Insurance; and Program No. 93.774, Medicare—Supplementary Medical Insurance Program)

Dated: December 15, 2004.

**Ann Agnew,**

*Executive Secretary to the Department.*

[FR Doc. 04-28157 Filed 12-29-04; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4120-01-P**

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

#### Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

[CMS-1285-N]

#### Medicare Program: Meeting of the Advisory Panel on Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) Groups (Panel)—February 23, 24, and 25, 2005, and Re-chartering of APC Panel on November 8, 2004

**AGENCY:** Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting and re-chartering of Panel.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with section 10(a) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2), this notice announces the first biannual meeting of the Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) Panel for 2005.

The purpose of the Panel is to review the APC groups and their associated weights and to advise the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services concerning the clinical integrity of the APC groups and their associated weights. The advice provided by the Panel will be considered as CMS prepares its annual updates of the