



Medicare Announces New Process for Adding Approved Drug Compendia

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) today formalized the process for requesting changes to the list of compendia that Medicare uses for determination of medically-accepted indications for off-label uses of drugs and biologicals in an anti-cancer chemotherapeutic regimen. CMS Transmittal 81 (Change Request 5870) provides additional details not previously released but the overall timeline for change requests remains the same.

CMS will provide a 30-day open request period starting January 15th of each year. During this time, the public may request additions or deletions to the list of compendia that CMS has approved for use by Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs). CMS will then post each completed request to the agency's Web site by March 15th for a 30-day public notice and comment period. CMS intends to publish decisions on the CMS Web site within 90 days of the close of the comment period.

In addition to the annual open request period, CMS may also generate a request for changes to the list any time that urgent action is believed to be needed. Because the open request period for 2008 passed prior to today's announcement, it is possible that a special open request period for 2008 will be made available.

There are currently three compendia that are approved by CMS. The list has not been updated for many years, and only one of the compendia on the current list (American Hospital Formulary Service – Drug Information [AHFS-DI]) remains in print.

CMS provides a definition of *compendium* and instructions for submitting a valid change request on its Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R81BP.pdf>

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