

## Physician Certification and Recertification of Home Health Services

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### Disclaimer

Highmark Health Options medical policy is intended to serve only as a general reference resource regarding coverage for the services described. This policy does not constitute medical advice and is not intended to govern or otherwise influence medical decisions.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Highmark Health Options may provide coverage under medical surgical benefits of the Company's Medicaid products for medically necessary physician certification and recertification of home health services.

This policy is designed to address medical necessity guidelines that are appropriate for the majority of individuals with a particular disease, illness, or condition. Each person's unique clinical circumstances warrant individual consideration, based upon review of applicable medical records.

The qualifications of the policy will meet the standards of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and all applicable state and federal regulations.

### DEFINITIONS

**Highmark Health Options (HHO)** – Managed care organization serving vulnerable populations that have complex needs and qualify for Medicaid. Highmark Health Options members include individuals and families with low income, expecting mothers, children, and people with disabilities. Members pay nothing to very little for their health coverage. Highmark Health Options currently services Delaware Medicaid: Delaware Healthy Children Program (DHCP) and Diamond State Health Plan Plus members.

### PROCEDURES

1. A prior authorization is required.

Coverage for home health services is determined according to individual or group customer benefit.

Payment can be made for covered home health services that a home health agency provides if a physician certifies that:

- The home health services are medically necessary because the individual is confined to his/her home and needs intermittent skilled nursing care, physical therapy and/or speech-language pathology services, or continues to need occupational therapy; where an individual's sole skilled service need is for skilled oversight of unskilled services the physician must include a brief narrative describing the clinical justification of this need as part of the certification and recertification, or as a signed addendum to the certification and recertification;
- A plan for furnishing such services to the individual has been established and is periodically reviewed by a physician; and
- The services are or were furnished while the individual was under the care of a physician.

As a condition for payment, prior to certifying an individual's eligibility for the home health benefit the certifying physician must document that he or she, or an allowed professional provider has had a face-to-face encounter with the patient. The initial certification is incomplete without them.

## 2. Face-to-face encounter

The certifying physician must document that he or she or an allowed professional provider had a face-to-face encounter with the individual. In addition to the physician, a certified registered nurse practitioner, who is the individual's primary care provider, can document the face-to-face encounter and sign the certification.

Other professional providers may perform the face-to-face encounter and inform the certifying physician regarding the clinical findings exhibited by the individual during the encounter. However, the certifying physician must document the encounter and sign the certification. In addition to the physician, professional providers who are allowed to perform the face-to-face encounter are:

- A certified registered nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist working in collaboration with the certifying physician in accordance with State law;
- A certified nurse-midwife as authorized by State law;
- A physician assistant under the supervision of the certifying physician.

Face-to face encounters should be reported with the most appropriate evaluation and management service that accurately reflects the level of care provided.

The face-to-face encounter requirement described above does not apply to the following:

- Private duty nursing (when this service is covered under the member's benefit plan).
- Visits to Mother and Newborn Following "Early Maternity Discharge" as noted under Pennsylvania Act 85 of 1996.
- Evaluation-only visits

## 3. Encounter documentation requirements

The documentation must include the date when the physician or allowed professional provider saw the individual, and a brief narrative composed by the certifying physician who describes how the individual's clinical condition as seen during that encounter supports the individual's homebound status and need for skilled services.

- The certifying physician must document the encounter either on the certification, which the physician signs and dates, or a signed addendum to the certification. It may be

written or typed. In addition to the physician, a certified registered nurse practitioner, who is the member's primary care provider, can document the face-to-face encounter and sign the certification.

- It is acceptable for the certifying physician to dictate the documentation content to one of the physician's support personnel to type. It is also acceptable for the documentation to be generated from a physician's electronic health record.
- It is unacceptable for the physician to verbally communicate the encounter to the home health agency (HHA), where the HHA would then document the encounter as part of the certification for the physician to sign.

#### 4. Timeframe requirements

- The encounter must occur no more than 90 days prior to the home health start of care date or within 30 days after the start of care.
- In situations when a physician orders home health care for the individual based on a new condition that was not evident during a visit within the 90 days prior to start of care, the certifying physician or an allowed professional provider must see the individual again within 30 days after the start of care. Specifically, if an individual saw the certifying physician or allowed professional provider within the 90 days prior to start of care, another encounter would be needed if the individual's condition had changed to the extent that standards of practice would indicate that the physician or an allowed professional provider should examine the individual in order to establish an effective treatment plan.

#### 5. Exceptional circumstances

When a home health individual dies shortly after the start of care, before the face-to-face encounter occurs, if it has been determined that a good faith effort existed on the part of the HHA to facilitate/coordinate the encounter and if all other certification requirements are met, the certification is deemed to be complete.

If the below conditions are met, an encounter between the home health individual and the attending physician who cared for the individual during an acute/post-acute stay can satisfy the face-to-face encounter requirement.

- A physician who attended to the individual in an acute or post-acute setting but does not follow the individual in the community (such as a hospitalist) may certify the need for home health care based on his/her contact with the individual and establish and sign the plan of care. The acute/post-acute physician would then transfer/hand-off the individual's care to a designated community-based physician who assumes care for the individual; or
- A physician who attended to the individual in an acute or post-acute setting may certify the need for home health care based on his/her contact with the individual, initiate the orders for home health services, and transfer the individual to a designated community-based physician to review and sign off on the plan of care.

#### 6. Recertification for home health services

When services are continued for a period of time, the physician must recertify at intervals of at least once every 60 days that there is a continuing need for services and should estimate how long services will be needed. The recertification should be obtained at the time the plan of care is reviewed since the same interval (at least once every 60 days) is required for the review of the plan.

The physician must recertify that the individual continues to meet the guidelines for home health services as indicated above.

Recertification must be signed by the physician who reviews the plan of treatment. The form of the recertification and the manner of obtaining timely recertification are up to the individual home health agency.

Note: This policy is designed to address medical guidelines that are appropriate for the majority of individuals with a particular disease, illness, or condition. Each person's unique clinical circumstances may warrant individual consideration, based on review of applicable medical records.

7. Post-payment audit statement

The medical record must include documentation that reflects the medical necessity criteria and is subject to audit by Highmark Health Options at any time pursuant to the terms of your provider agreement.

8. Place of service: outpatient

### CODING REQUIREMENTS

CPT code	Description
99202	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: an expanded problem focused history; an expanded problem focused examination; and straightforward medical decision-making. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of low to moderate severity. Typically, 20 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient and/or family.
99203	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: detailed history; a detailed examination; and medical decision-making of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are moderate severity. Typically, 30 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient and/or family.
99204	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate to high severity. Typically, 45 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient and/or family.
99205	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate to high severity. Typically, 60 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient and/or family.

99211	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, that may not require the presence of a physician. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are minimal, typically 5 minutes are spent performing or supervising these services.
99212	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a problem focused history; a problem focused examination; or a straightforward medical decision-making. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are self-limited or minor. Typically, 10 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient.
99213	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a problem focused history; a problem focused examination; or a straightforward medical decision-making. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are self-limited or minor. Typically, 10 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient.
99214	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a detailed history; a detailed examination; or a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are moderate to high severity. Typically, 25 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient.
99215	Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; or a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are moderate to high severity. Typically, 40 minutes are spent face-to-face with the patient.
99217	Observation care discharge day management (this code is to be utilized by the physician to report all services provided to a patient on discharge from "observation status" if the discharge is on other than the initial date of "observation status." To report services to a patient designated "observation status" or "inpatient status" and discharged on the same date the codes for observation or inpatient care services (including admission and discharge services, 99234-99236 as appropriate).
99218	Initial observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient which requires these three key components: A detailed or comprehensive history; a detailed or comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making that is straightforward or of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission to outpatient hospital "observation status" are of low severity. Typically, 30 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99219	Initial observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission to outpatient hospital

	"observation status" are of moderate severity. Typically, 50 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99220	Initial observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified healthcare professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission to "observation status" are of high severity. Typically 70 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99221	Initial hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a detailed or comprehensive history; a detailed or comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making that is straightforward or of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission are of low severity. Physicians typically spend 30 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99222	Initial hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission are of moderate severity. Physicians typically spend 50 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99223	Initial hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission are of high severity. Physicians typically spend 70 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99224	Subsequent observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: problem focused interval history; problem focused examination; or a medical decision-making that is straightforward or of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the patient is stable, recovering, or improving. Physicians typically spend 15 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99225	Subsequent observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: an expanded problem focused interval history; an expanded problem focused examination; or a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the patient is responding inadequately to therapy or has developed a minor complication. Physicians typically spend 25 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99226	Subsequent observation care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a detailed interval history; a detailed examination; or a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the patient is unstable or has developed a significant complication or a significant new problem.

	Physicians typically spend 35 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99231	Subsequent hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of the three key components: a problem focused interval history; a problem focused examination; or a medical decision-making that is straightforward or of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the patient is stable, recovering or improving. Physicians typically spend 15 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99232	Subsequent hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: an expanded problem focused interval history; an expanded problem focused examination; or a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the patient is responding inadequately to therapy or has developed a minor complication. Typically, 25 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99233	Subsequent hospital care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of the three key components: a detailed interval history; a detailed examination; or a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other providers or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the patient is unstable or has developed a significant complication or a significant new problem. Physicians typically spend 35 minutes at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99234	Observation or inpatient hospital care, for the evaluation and management of a patient including admission and discharge on the same date which requires these three key components: a detailed or comprehensive history; a detailed or comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making that is straightforward or of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified healthcare professionals or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually the presenting problem(s) requiring admission are of low severity. Typically, 40 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99235	Observation or inpatient hospital care, for the evaluation and management of a patient including admission and discharge on the same date which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified healthcare professionals or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually the presenting problem(s) requiring admission are of moderate severity. Typically, 50 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99236	Observation or inpatient hospital care, for the evaluation and management of a patient including admission and discharge on the same date which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified healthcare professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually the presenting problem(s) requiring admission are of high severity. Typically, 55 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's hospital floor or unit.
99238	Hospital discharge day management; 30 min or less.
99239	Hospital discharge day management; more than 30 min.

99304	Initial nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a detailed or comprehensive history; a detailed or comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making that is straightforward or of low complexity. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission are of low severity. Typically, 25 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99305	Initial nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission are of moderate severity. Typically, 35 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99306	Initial nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of high complexity. Usually, the problem(s) requiring admission are of high severity. Typically, 45 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99307	Subsequent nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a problem focused interval history; a problem focused examination; or a straightforward medical decision-making. Usually, the patient is stable, recovering, or improving. Typically, 10 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99308	Subsequent nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: an expanded problem focused interval history; an expanded problem focused examination; or a medical decision-making of low complexity. Usually, the patient is responding inadequately to therapy or has developed a minor complication. Typically, 15 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99309	Subsequent nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a detailed interval history; a detailed examination; or a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Usually, the patient has developed a significant complication or a significant new problem. Typically, 25 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99310	Subsequent nursing facility care, per day, for the evaluation and management of a patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a comprehensive interval history; a comprehensive examination; or a medical decision-making of high complexity. The patient may be unstable or may have developed a significant new problem requiring immediate physician attention. Typically, 35 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99318	Evaluation and management of a patient involving an annual nursing facility assessment, which requires these three key components: a detailed interval history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making that is of low to moderate complexity. Usually, the patient is stable, recovering, or improving. Typically, 30 minutes are spent at the bedside and on the patient's facility floor or unit.
99341	Home visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: a problem focused history; a problem focused examination; and a straightforward medical decision-making. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of low severity. Typically, 20 minutes are spent face to face with the patient and/or family.
99342	Home visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: an expanded problem focused history; an expanded problem focused examination; and a medical decision-making of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or

	agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate severity. Typically, 30 minutes are spent face to face with the patient and/or family.
99343	Home visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: a detailed history; a detailed examination; and a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are moderate to high severity. Typically, 45 minutes are spent face to face with the patient and/or family.
99344	Home visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of high severity. Typically, 60 minutes are spent face to face with the patient and/or family.
99345	Home visit for the evaluation and management of a new patient, which requires these three key components: a comprehensive history; a comprehensive examination; and a medical decision-making of high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the patient is unstable or has developed a significant new problem requiring immediate physician attention. Physicians typically spend 75 minutes face to face with the patient and/or family.
99347	Home visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a problem focused history; a problem focused examination; or a straightforward medical decision-making. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are self-limited or minor. Typically, 15 minutes are spent face to face with the patient and/or family.
99348	Home visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: an expanded problem focused interval history; an expanded problem focused examination; or a medical decision-making of low complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of low to moderate severity. Typically, 25 minutes are spent face to face with the patient and/or family.
99349	Home visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a detailed interval history; a detailed examination; or a medical decision-making of moderate complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate to high severity. Typically, 40 minutes are spent face to face with the patient and/or family.
99350	Home visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a comprehensive interval history; a comprehensive examination; or a medical decision-making of moderate to high complexity. Counseling and/or coordination of care with other physicians, other qualified health care professionals, or agencies are provided consistent with the nature of the problem(s) and the patient's and/or family's needs. Usually, the presenting problem(s) are of moderate to

	high severity. Patient may be unstable or may have developed a significant new problem requiring immediate physician attention, 60 minutes.
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**REIMBURSEMENT**

Participating facilities will be reimbursed per their Highmark Health Options contract.

**Reference**

Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, Section 1862(a)(7). This section excludes routine physical examinations.

Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, Section 1862(a)(1)(A) states that no payment shall be made for items or services which are not reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of illness or injury.

Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, Section 1833(e) states that no payment shall be made to any provider for any claim that lacks the necessary information to process the claim  
CMS Online Manual Pub. 100-1, Chapter 4, Section 30

CMS Online Manual Pub. 100-1, Chapter 5, Section 70

CMS Online Manual Pub. 100-2, Chapter 7

CMS Online Manual Pub. 100-4, Chapter 12, Section 180.1

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MNL Matters Number: SE1038

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Boyd CM, Leff B, Bellantoni J, et al. Interactions Between Physicians and Skilled Home Health Care Agencies in the Certification of Medicare Beneficiaries' Plans of Care: Results of a Nationally Representative Survey. *Annals Int Med.* 2018:168(10).

**POLICY UPDATE HISTORY**

<Date>	<Event>
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