

(Continued)

aged care plans will be required to put limits on financial losses for their physicians, as well as to conduct annual beneficiary surveys.

"The final rule addresses some of the concerns of Congress and the public about the pressures and incentives HMOs create for physicians' care decisions," said HCFA Administrator Bruce C. Vladeck.

The regulation applies to physicians providing medical care through health maintenance organizations, competitive medical plans and health insuring organizations. Under the regulation, HCFA may impose intermediate sanctions and HHS' Office of the Inspector General may impose civil monetary penalties upon Medicare or Medicaid managed care contractors who fail to comply.

FROM: THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: 03/26/96

NICKLES CALLS FOR TAX EQUITY AMENDMENT TO HEALTH CARE BILL

■(WASHINGTON) Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles today announced a plan to make the health care tax deduction more fair for all Americans.

"Right now, the tax code only allows a partial health insurance deduction for the self-employed, but gives corporations a 100 percent write-off," Nickles said. "That isn't fair."

"My amendment is the first step toward equalizing the tax code by raising the deduction rate to 50 percent for the self-employed," Nickles said. "This is a positive step toward a more fair tax code for all Americans."

FROM: U.S. SENATOR DON NICKLES, R-OKLAHOMA

DATE: 03/27/96

HCFA BEGINS NEW FLEXIBLE SURVEY PROCESS FOR SOME CLINICAL LABS

■(WASHINGTON) The Health Care Financing Administration has begun using a new flexible survey process which is in effect for some clinical laboratories with excellent performance records.

The self-evaluation procedure, called the Alternate Quality Assessment Survey, is designed to be used by certain laboratories for recertification purposes under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA) in lieu of an on-site survey. HCFA has begun recertifying laboratories with exceptional past performance by allowing them to complete a self-survey questionnaire.

To supplement the new survey process, no laboratory will go longer than four years without an on-site survey. HCFA also will perform, every two years, random on-site surveys of a 5 percent sample of laboratories that are using the new survey process to verify its effectiveness.

CLIA sets uniform quality standards for clinical laboratories. The laboratories that conduct moderately or highly complex tests must be surveyed and recertified by HCFA every two years and must participate in proficiency testing. Until now, all surveys have been conducted on-site.

Currently, HCFA is responsible for implementing federal quality assurance standards for 152,000 laboratories. Of these laboratories, 59 percent are exempt from surveys because they do only simple tests. The remaining 41 percent are subject to routine surveys under CLIA.

Under the new survey process, a laboratory's completed self-assessment form and supplemental documentation are reviewed. If no problems are identified, the laboratory will be recertified for two years, the duration of the CLIA certification cycle.

FROM: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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