Iowa Department of INSPECTIONS & APPEALS

CMS directs state survey agencies to cease all surveys in federally-certified health facilities except in the most serious cases

DES MOINES — On Monday, March 23, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) instructed all state survey agencies (SSAs), including the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA), to suspend all surveys in federally-certified health facilities, except in cases of "immediate jeopardy" (IJ) or revisits to verify that a facility has remedied an IJ situation, targeted infection-control surveys, and initial surveys.

"Immediate jeopardy" is a term that CMS describes the most serious of allegations against a facility, where "the provider's noncompliance with one or more requirements...has caused, or is likely to cause, serious injury, harm, impairment, or death to a resident."

Targeted infection-control surveys will include surveys of providers identified through collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Health and Humans Services (HHS) assistant secretary for preparedness and response, and the Iowa Department of Public Health. DIA will use a streamlined review checklist to minimize the impact on provider activities, while ensuring providers are implementing actions to protect the health and safety of individuals who respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, CMS suspended current enforcement actions including mandatory termination dates, accrual of civil monetary penalties, and denial of payment for new admissions for three weeks, beginning March 17.

Following CMS' action regarding survey prioritization, DIA made the decision to suspend all surveys in State-licensed or certified entities as well, except in cases of "immediate jeopardy" (IJ) or revisits to verify that a facility has remedied an IJ situation, and targeted infection-control surveys, in an effort to protect the health and safety of Iowans served in these facilities.

Iowans who wish to learn more about COVID-19 in Iowa, how to prevent the spread of the virus, and actions State agencies have taken should visit the Iowa Coronavirus website. For DIA-specific actions and guidance, visit DIA's Novel Coronavirus page.

The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals is committed to protecting the health and safety of Iowans through regulation and oversight of health care, food, and gaming; application of administrative law; and investigation of Medicaid and welfare fraud.

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