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SECRETARY

November 20, 2007

To: Ambulatory Surgical Centers Seeking Medicare and Medicaid Certification

Subject: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Direction Regarding Workload Prioritization

This letter is to notify ambulatory surgical centers seeking Medicare and Medicaid certification of important information from CMS. While there is no moratorium on ambulatory surgical center surveys, initial certification surveys are listed as Tier 4 (lowest) priority for all survey work.

CMS states that the assignment of a lower priority for new ambulatory surgical center certification is necessary since federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid surveys has decreased. States cannot conduct initial surveys of new providers unless they can ensure they will be completing all statutorily-required surveys or surveys assessed a higher priority by CMS. CMS requires that all states complete their higher priority work before using any federal funds for initial surveys. Florida will not have federal funds available for initial certification surveys once all of the higher priority work is completed.

Ambulatory surgical centers have another option that will provide for the survey necessary for Medicare and Medicaid certification. You may choose a national accrediting organization to conduct your ambulatory surgical center's initial certification survey. This requires that your center seek accreditation along with deemed status. "Deemed status" means the ambulatory surgical center meets the federal conditions of participation on an unannounced survey conducted by the accrediting organization. Listed below are the accrediting organizations accepted by CMS to conduct deemed status surveys:

- The Joint Commission - (630) 792-5000, web site www.jointcommission.org.
- American Osteopathic Association – (800) 621-1773, web site www.hfap.org.
- Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care – (847) 853-6060, web site www.aaahc.org.
- American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities – (888) 545-5222, web site www.aaaasf.org.

If you have questions about this letter, please contact Laura MacLafferty, Hospital and Outpatient Services Unit at (850) 487-2717.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Dudek, Deputy Secretary
Division of Health Quality Assurance

