

Report in Brief

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Report No. A-04-17-02500

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Why OIG Did This Review

For certain deficiencies, identified during surveys, Federal Regulations require nursing and skilled nursing facilities (nursing homes) to submit correction plans to CMS or to their respective State survey agencies. State survey agencies must verify the correction of identified deficiencies either by obtaining evidence of correction or through onsite reviews.

Previous Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviews found that State survey agencies did not verify that selected nursing homes had corrected identified deficiencies. This review of the State survey agency in North Carolina is part of a series of OIG reviews.

Our objective was to determine whether North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Service Regulation (State survey agency), verified the correction of nursing home deficiencies identified during surveys in calendar year (CY) 2015 in accordance with Federal requirements.

How OIG Did This Review

Of the 1,150 deficiencies that required a correction plan during CY 2015, we selected and reviewed a stratified random sample of 100. We reviewed State survey agency documentation to determine whether the State survey agency had verified the correction of nursing home deficiencies.

North Carolina Did Not Always Verify Correction of Deficiencies Identified During Surveys of Nursing Homes Participating in Medicare and Medicaid

What OIG Found

The State survey agency did not always verify the correction of nursing home deficiencies identified during surveys in CY 2015 in accordance with Federal requirements.

For the 100 sampled deficiencies, the State survey agency verified the correction of 96 nursing home deficiencies but did not obtain evidence of correction for the remaining 4 deficiencies.

On the basis of our sample results, we estimated that that State survey agency did not verify the correction of nursing home deficiencies in accordance with Federal requirements for 5 percent of the deficiencies identified during surveys in CY 2015.

What OIG Recommends and State Survey Agency Comments

We recommend that the State survey agency (1) provide guidance and training to its surveyors to ensure that they properly upload system data and (2) ensure that it obtains, reviews, and verifies adequate documentation that supports all aspects of nursing home correction plans.

In written comments on our draft report, the State survey agency concurred with our recommendations and stated that it had begun to implement them; however, it did not concur with four of the five errors we identified in the draft report. The State survey agency provided documentation for the remaining four errors to demonstrate that it had verified the nursing homes' corrections of deficiencies that we had identified as errors.

After reviewing the State survey agency's comments and documentation for the four errors with which it did not concur, we agreed with the documentation provided for one and we revised the number of deficiencies that the State survey agency did not verify as corrected. However, the additional information provided did not alter our error determination on the remaining three errors. Therefore, we maintain that we identified a total of four errors and this has been reflected in this final report.