POLICY

High Peaks Hospice (HPH)’s Medical Director or the Hospice Physician and the individual’s attending physician, if the individual has an attending physician, will sign a written certification that the individual’s prognosis is for a life expectancy of six months or less if the terminal illness runs its normal course.

PROCEDURE

1. The final determination of hospice eligibility is the responsibility of the HPH Medical Director or the Hospice Physician.

2. Clinical information and other documentation that support the medical prognosis must be filed in the medical record with the certification. Initially, the clinical information may be provided verbally, and must be documented in the medical record and included as part of HPH’s eligibility assessment.

3. HPH staff will obtain a certification that supports a life expectancy of 6 months or less from the individual’s attending physician and the HPH Medical Director or the Hospice Physician.

   A. Oral certification may be accomplished by phone from the attending physician and noted in the medical record. Certifications can be obtained up to 14 days prior to the admission date but no later than 2 days after admission.

   B. A written certification is required before hospice services can be billed. The attending physician and Medical Director, or Hospice Physician will document this certification on the “Hospice Initial Certification” form. A narrative addressing the individual’s condition will be attested to on the form.

   C. Dates from the written certification will be entered in the individual’s medical record.

      (See Clinical Policy “Determining Medicare Hospice Eligibility, CP218” for more information)
4. The Director of Nursing or designee is responsible to verify the prognosis of the individual with the attending physician by requesting the most recent history and physical, discharge summary, or relevant progress note from the attending physician’s office or referring hospital, showing evidence of the individual’s prognosis. This information is to be filed with the Certification documents in the individual’s medical record.

5. The HPH Medical Director, or Hospice Physician will communicate with the individual's attending physician and formulate a decision on certification based on available information for any case where there is disagreement or concern regarding prognosis or a particular care issue.

6. The individual’s attending physician will be notified of the individual’s admission status on the same day of the decision by the RN Case Manager processing the admission.

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