

The Frontier Extended Stay Clinic Demonstration – October 2011

The Frontier Extended Stay Clinic (FESC) demonstration, mandated by Section 434 of the Medicare Modernization Act, allows remote clinics to treat patients for more extended periods, including overnight stays, than are entailed in routine physician visits. According to the legislation, a clinic must be located in a community that is at least 75 miles from the nearest acute care hospital or critical access hospital, or that is inaccessible by public road. The law mandates that the project last for 3 years.

The law allows waiver of provisions of the Medicare program as are necessary to conduct the demonstration project. The FESC will address the needs of seriously or critically ill or injured patients who, due to adverse weather conditions or other reasons, cannot be transferred to acute care hospitals, or patients who need monitoring and observation for a limited period of time, but do not require hospitalization. The FESC legislation requires that the demonstration be budget neutral to the Medicare program.

Conditions of participation developed for the demonstration identify the criteria by which patients would be eligible for FESC services, define what practitioners are eligible to participate in the treatment of an extended stay patient, specify how soon the practitioner must arrive at the facility in case of an emergency, and include other types of rules that govern providers.

There are currently 5 clinics participating in the demonstration. All of these clinics have received Medicare certification from the CMS Seattle Regional Office. These clinics are:

Alicia Roberts Medical Center	Prince of Wales Island, Alaska
Haines Health Center	Haines, Alaska
Cross Road Medical Center	Glennallen, Alaska
Iliuliuk Family & Health Services	Unalaska, Alaska
Inter island Medical Center	Friday Harbor, Washington

CMS is also working with its Medicare Administrative Contractors and fiscal intermediaries on changes to Medicare payment processes for the demonstration. The end date for the demonstration is April 15, 2013 - 3 years after the implementation of the first site.

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