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**Documentation Signature Requirements**(Rev. 12/12/13)

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This memo is to clarify the signature guideline from The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding signature requirements for review of claims and medical documentation submitted by providers effective April 16<sup>th</sup> 2010.

For medical review purposes, Medicare requires services provided/ordered be authenticated by the author. There are some exceptions to this requirement, please see <http://www.cms.gov/manuals/downloads/pim83c03.pdf> - Medicare Program Integrity Manual Section 3.4.1.1B.

Our Medicare intermediary, Novitas, published provider examples of signature requirements. The treating physician's signature must be present in the documentation associated with all services submitted to Medicare. Medicare requires the signature be a legible identifier for the provided/ordered services. The physician's signature can be in the form of either a handwritten signature or an electronic signature. Stamped signatures (i.e., rubber stamps) are not acceptable signatures.

Listed below are examples of acceptable phrases for electronic signatures:

- "Electronically signed by" with provider's name.
- "Verified by" with provider's name.
- "Reviewed by" with provider's name.
- "Signed by" with provider's name.
- "Signed: John Smith, M.D." with provider's name.
- "This is an electronically verified report by John Smith, M.D."
- "Authenticated by John Smith, M.D."
- "Authorized by: John Smith, M.D."
- "Confirmed by" with provider's name.
- "Electronically approved by" with provider's name.
- Novitas expects the phrase/signature to be dated.

Examples of acceptable handwritten signatures:

- The handwritten signature must be legible.
- The handwritten signature must clearly identify the provider performing the billed services.

Examples of unacceptable signatures:

- The legible signature is missing from the documentation.
- The signature is illegible.
- The signature cannot be verified as that of the performing provider.
- The signature is typewritten but not authenticated by either a handwritten signature or an electronic signature.
- The provider's letterhead alone does not constitute legible identification.
- The provider's initials alone do not constitute legible identification.
- Signature Dating Requirements for a Medicare medical review is also outlined with a determining factor of the documentation must contain enough information for the reviewer to determine the date on which the service was performed/ordered.

References: CMS MLN Matters #6698, CMS MLN Matters #8219, (IOM)100-8, Cpt 3. Sect 3.3.4