

## Docs engage little to coordinate medicare home health care

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(HealthDay)—Physicians do not meaningfully engage with skilled home

health care (SHHC) agencies in the certification of Medicare beneficiaries' plans of care, according to a study published online April 3 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Cynthia M. Boyd, M.D., M.P.H., from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, and colleagues surveyed family or general [medicine](#) physicians to understand their interaction with SHHC agencies and use of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services form 485 (CMS-485) when coordinating care for patients receiving SHHC services.

Based on responses from 1,005 physicians, the researchers found that 72 percent had certified at least one plan of care in the past year.

Approximately half of respondents (47 percent) reported spending less than one minute reviewing the CMS-485 before certification versus 21 percent who reported spending at least two minutes. Physicians typically used mail or fax to interact with multiple SHHC agencies. The majority (80 percent) rarely or never changed an order on the CMS-485, while 78.3 percent rarely or never contacted SHHC clinicians with questions. On a scale of one to 10 (easy to difficult), respondents rated the mean ease of contacting the SHHC agency as 4.7.

"The CMS-485 does not meaningfully engage physicians. Physicians spend little time reviewing or acting on the SHHC plan of care," the authors write. "Strategies to enhance meaningful communication between SHHC agencies and physicians are needed."

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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