

Compliance Today – June 2020 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issues regulatory waivers for COVID-19 pandemic

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The burden placed on hospitals during the coronavirus pandemic has spurred regulators to issue waivers and ease restrictions^[1] on how healthcare organizations operate. A series of issuances on March 30 give greater flexibility to hospitals, including the ability to contract out to “non-traditional” healthcare entities, such as hotels, dormitories, ambulatory surgery centers, and inpatient rehabilitation hospitals in order to open up beds for patients suffering from COVID-19.

The waivers address a variety of issues that handcuffed healthcare organizations during the early days of the pandemic and will hopefully have a great effect in the coming months as the US healthcare system responds to a surge in critically ill patients. Some of the issues include childcare and meals for healthcare workers, the aforementioned ability to contract services out to non-traditional healthcare facilities, promote telehealth capabilities, and reduce the amount of paperwork healthcare workers are required to fill out.

The changes are meant to be temporary.

¹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, “Trump Administration Makes Sweeping Regulatory Changes to Help U.S. Healthcare System Address COVID-19 Patient Surge,” news release, March 30, 2020, <https://go.cms.gov/2UOBdRT> .

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