



ALABAMA QUALITY ASSURANCE FOUNDATION
Medical Quality Assurance

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GENERAL MEMORANDUM NO. 0205-10

For Immediate Distribution

TO: Administrators
Alabama Hospitals
Alabama Long Term Acute Care Hospitals

FROM: E. Eugene Marsh, MD
Medical Director _____

Rob Bowman
Chief Executive Officer _____

DATE: November 2, 2004

SUBJECT: InterQual® Criteria

- I. This General Memorandum is to inform you of the change in screening criteria to be used by Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation (AQAF) for Medicare admissions to general acute care and long term care hospitals in Alabama. This decision was based on research of several different criteria to provide practical tools for guiding, monitoring and documenting point-of-care decisions based on evidence-based practice. Criteria are not intended to deny care, but rather to screen for cases that warrant secondary review by a physician ensuring that care is provided in the appropriate care setting.
- II. AQAF will begin using InterQual® Criteria to review Medicare admissions beginning with January 1, 2005 admissions. InterQual® Criteria will replace the previous AQAF Severity of Illness/Intensity of Service (SI/IS) Criteria used since February 2, 2004. It is not a requirement that hospitals use InterQual® Criteria for internal utilization review. AQAF will not be able to provide the InterQual® Criteria to hospitals. InterQual® Criteria is also currently used by the Clinical Data Abstraction Center (CDAC).
- III. Part 482 of the *Conditions of Participation* for hospitals states that hospitals participating in Medicare and Medicaid must have a utilization review (UR) plan. Chapter 11, Section 200 of the *Hospital Manual* defines a hospital as an institution, which has in effect a hospital utilization plan. The law requires that effective UR be maintained on a continuing basis to assure the medical necessity of the services and promote the most efficient use of available health facilities and services.
- IV. AQAF has consulted with physicians/practitioners who are actively engaged in practice in Alabama, the Medical Association for the State of Alabama, the Alabama Hospital Association, Cahaba GBA, Mutual of Omaha, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama prior to implementation.

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V. InterQual® has agreed to have the Hospital Sales Executive contact, Glenn Morrissey (617) 273-3219, assist Alabama providers with questions and additional information regarding their services.

VI. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Cynthia McIntosh at 205-970-1600, ext. 3506, or Lisa Kell at 205-970-1600, ext. 3201.

cc: AQAF Board of Directors; Donna Kyle, PO/DHHS; Cary Kuhlman, MASA; Mike Horsley, AlaHA – Montgomery, Frazer Rolen, AlaHA- Birmingham; Linda Northcutt, BCBS; Fred Robertson, MD, Cahaba GBA; Greg McKinney, MD, Cahaba GBA; Mary Woon, MoO.