



Providing Ambulance Billing Service to New England Since 1984

# NEWSLETTER

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## New Rule for Patient Signatures

As described in Comstar's November 2007 and December 2007 newsletters and also announced in many state, federal and EMS industry publications, CMS (Medicare) is now requiring that ambulance services attain signatures (from the patient or the receiving hospital depending on the circumstances).

Comstar has on-line documents (see next column) from our EMS Attorney, David Werfel, which explain the new signature rule and provides samples forms / wording to use to comply.

In our November 2007 newsletter, we noted that one ambulance service has already been penalized by CMS for failing to obtain signatures. The ambulance service cited was a city / municipality operated ambulance service. Please be advised that any perception that this new rule does not apply to city, town or volunteer services is not correct. **This new rule applies to all services** who participate with Medicare.

**In submitting claims on your behalf, Comstar assumes that you are in compliance with all applicable regulations including this new signature requirement. Comstar assumes that if you have sent us a run report to bill on your behalf that you have obtained the requisite signature from the patient or the receiving facility and have it on file. Requests for proof of signature can come from CMS at any time. If you are not compliant for some reason, please notify us immediately.**

## New Rule for Patient Signatures – Sample Forms

Our EMS Attorney, David Werfel, has provided sample forms to assist with your compliance of the new signature rule.

Sample Form #1 uses very "soft" language and is designed to meet the new exception for emergency that was created in the Final Rule

Sample Form #2 replaces the "Emergency" language and reason and is designed to cover the situation where the facility is signing on behalf of the patient, which we believe would therefore be good for emergencies and non-emergencies. We are waiting for confirmation from CMS on this point.

The full text of Mr. Werfel's explanation of these sample forms and the forms themselves can be found on Comstar's website, [www.comstarbilling.com](http://www.comstarbilling.com), click on Home Page, then On-Line Documents (in lower right corner of Home Page).

This newsletter is not intended as legal advice. Consult an attorney for specific legal advice concerning your situation.

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