

SPOTLIGHT ON DR. HARRY FELICIANO, M.D.

Dr. Feliciano is a specialist in internal medicine, geriatrics, preventive medicine and public health. He received his medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and his Masters of Public Health degree from the Columbia University School of Public Health. He had been interested in the applications of the ICDH for many years and, with publication of the ICF in 2001, has tried to incorporate the spirit of the ICF into Palmetto GBA Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs). LCDs are administrative and educational tools to assist Medicare providers in submitting correct claims for payment. While Medicare claims do not use ICF codes for processing, Palmetto GBA is using the ICF domains and categories to clarify covered Medicare services using scenarios.

Feliciano joined Palmetto GBA, LLC (a wholly-owned subsidiary of BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina) in 1997. Palmetto GBA's principal business is providing administrative services for the Medicare health benefit program throughout the continuum of care from inpatient rehabilitation to home health and hospice services. In 2004, under its contracts with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency responsible for Medicare, Palmetto GBA processed 113 million claims, responded to 4 million customer inquiries and paid nearly \$25 billion in Medicare benefits. Palmetto GBA's 3,400 associates served over 8.7 million Medicare beneficiaries throughout the United States from its offices in Columbia and Camden, S.C.; Augusta, Ga.; Palm Harbor, Fla.; Durham, N.C.; Columbus and Wheelersburg, Ohio and Springfield, Ill.

Palmetto GBA's scope provides an excellent environment within which to implement ICF-based educational initiatives. It has enabled him to incorporate the ICF into public health policy and educational interventions, with the aim of increasing both provider and beneficiary knowledge of Medicare covered services. Harry serves as the Contractor Medical Director (CMD) for Palmetto GBA's Regional Home Health Intermediary (RHHI) overseeing health policy development in 16 states for Home Health and Hospice services. Along with Dr. Charles Stewart, he also provides policy oversight for other Part A Medicare services (e.g., Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and CORFs) in the states of North and South Carolina.

Palmetto GBA began working with Medicare providers 39 years ago at the inception of the Medicare program. Since that time much has changed. The increasing number and age of Medicare beneficiaries, together with the increasing prevalence of chronic disabling conditions, has created many treatment opportunities for Medicare providers. The documentation of associated impairments, activity limitations, and disability, however, is a complex task requiring a standardized approach. The resultant clinical record must support both the implementation of a beneficiary-specific care plan and Medicare reimbursement. It is for this reason that Palmetto GBA has utilized the ICF to help Medicare providers translate clinical insight into medical documentation that would support Medicare payment. The specificity contained in the ICF is ideal for this task

because it allows the Medicare providers to go beyond diagnosis in their medical documentation.

A Medicare provider recently likened his efforts on behalf of the ICF to those of Johnny Appleseed of U.S. folklore. His hope is that through the efforts of the North American Collaborating Center and others, the ICF seeds will bear fruit for Medicare providers and beneficiaries.