

TO: Local District Commissioners, Medicaid Directors, Third Party Supervisors

FROM: Betty Rice, Director
Office of Medicaid Management

SUBJECT: Hospice Care

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 2003

CONTACT PERSON: Local District Support Unit (518) 474-8216 (Upstate)
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The purpose of this GIS message is to notify you that Governor Pataki recently signed Chapter 526 of the law of 2002, which adds hospice care to the Family Health Plus and Child Health Plus B benefit package effective February 1, 2003.

FHPlus plans will be required to provide a coordinated hospice program of home and inpatient care covering non-curative medical and support services for members certified by a physician to be terminally ill with a life expectancy of six months or less. All hospice care services must be provided according to the participating physician's written treatment plan, which will reflect the changing needs of the member and the member's family. Family members are eligible for up to five bereavement counseling visits as part of the hospice benefit. Hospices must be certified under Article 40 of the New York State Public Health Law.

Family Health Plus plans will:

- Modify member handbooks to provide information about how to access hospice care.
- Modify all marketing materials that list the services covered in the FHP benefit package to include hospice service.
- Execute the FHPlus contract amendment adding hospice services effective February 1, 2003.
- Execute contracts with hospice providers no later than February 1, 2003.
- Notify all members of the availability of hospice care.
- Revise provider directories to reflect this new provider group.
- Include hospice providers on the quarterly Health Provider Network submission.

Local district staff should be aware that hospice services are available to FHPlus enrollees. Client notices that indicate hospice is not a covered service for FHPlus will be revised. Local districts must ensure that any local equivalent notices are revised as well. Please note that the availability of hospice services may be important to spenddown eligible people who are choosing between Medicaid and FHPlus.