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Open Door Call Shuts Out HME Questions

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BALTIMORE — Home medical equipment providers looking for answers on everything from CERT audits to PECOS problems came up empty-handed at CMS' Open Door Forum March 10.

The regularly scheduled conference call focused solely on home health agencies and hospice. Still, HME stakeholders sought answers to troubling questions during the question-and-answer portion of the call.

Bruce Levinson from the Center for Regulatory Effectiveness, a regulatory watchdog organization, wanted to know about financial standards for providers participating in the [DMEPOS competitive bidding project \(/topics/competitive-bidding/\)](/topics/competitive-bidding/).

"When will [the Department of Health and Human Services] be specifying those standards?" he asked.

"If you could submit an email, that would be great," a CMS representative replied.

Two other callers asked for clarification about new oxygen maintenance and service requirements and got the same response.

Another caller requested information on how long patient records must be kept to satisfy a Comprehensive Error Rate Testing (CERT) audit.

Send an email, that caller was told.

"I have emailed and have never gotten a response," the caller said.

Three other callers wondered about the use of Advance Beneficiary Notices when physicians refused to update their information in the PECOS (Provider Enrollment, Chain and Ownership System), which, beginning in January 2011, will invalidate a Medicare claim.

"I can't get a claim through the front door when the beneficiary wants the claim submitted when these doctors just aren't going to do it," said one.

A CMS representative offered to phone each of the three callers to discuss the issue.

The next Open Door call is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14.

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