Electronic Staffing Submission – Payroll-Based Journal Public Use File Released

<u>General Questions</u>
Q: What is CMS releasing?
A: On November 1, 2017, CMS is releasing staffing data submitted by long term care facilities for calendar quarters 1 and 2, 2017. The data is submitted through the Payroll-Based Journal system and includes the hours nursing staff are paid to work each day, for each facility. The categories of nursing staff include director of nursing, registered nurses with administrative duties, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses with administrative duties, licensed practical nurses, certified nurse aides, medication aides, and nurse aides in training. The file also includes a facility's census for each day within the quarter as calculated using the minimum data set (MDS) submission. These files do not include any calculations of measures. Rather, they include the raw number of hours that providers have submitted and have real-time access to view on their own.

Q: Why is CMS releasing the data?
A: Staffing within long term care facilities has a tremendous impact on the quality of care delivered to residents. As of July 2016, all long term care facilities are required to electronically submit staffing data that is auditable back to payrolls and other verifiable sources. CMS is committed to transparency and we believe facilities, consumers, and other stakeholders will find this information useful in understanding the current status of this requirement, and the reported staffing from facilities.

Q: What do the data show?
A: The data show that 95% of facilities have successfully submitted data by the last deadline of August 14, 2017. Additionally, approximately 88% of facilities have submitted hours for nurse aides for each day in the quarter. We believe these are positive indicators that facilities are able to implement and meet the requirement. We also believe this indicated that the majority of facilities are able to submit complete data that can be used to calculate accurate staffing measures.

Q: Can CMS use this data to establish minimum staffing ratios?
A: No. It is too early to draw conclusions from the data submitted. That said, we intend to thoroughly evaluate the data to identify any correlations with outcomes or quality, to help inform any future policy direction.

Q: How does this staffing data compare to the staffing data CMS collects and already posts on the Nursing Home Compare website?
A: We do not believe the two data sets can be compared to each other for a variety of reasons. For example, the staffing measures posted on the *Nursing Home Compare* website are calculated from a two-week "snap shot" of hours, and a single day's census. Conversely, the Payroll-Based Journal data includes the census and hours of staff for every day within a quarter. Since census and staffing levels can change each day, we do not expect the data from the two sources to

match. More information about the differences in the data can be found in the section titled, "About the Payroll-Based Journal Data" in the S&C memo.

Q: What are the next steps?
A: Releasing these data is the first step of many to come. Moving forward, we intend to continue to post data each quarter. We are also analyzing the data and working on the methodology to calculate staffing measures such as the level of hours per resident per day, and rates of turnover and tenure. We intend to post these measures on the *Nursing Home Compare* website in 2018, and use them in the *Nursing Home Five Star Quality Rating System.* Once posted, these measures will replace the existing source and methodology for posted staffing information.

Any actions taken that will change information displayed on Nursing Home Compare are reflected in the month following that action. PBJ data submitted after the deadline will lift the facility's rating suppression but the indicator will not be updated as late submissions indicate noncompliance with the reporting requirement.

Q: Where can someone find more information on this program?
A: Individuals can view the Payroll-Based Journal webpage at
https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/NursingHomeQualityInits/Staffing-Data-Submission-PBJ.html

Additional questions can also be submitted to NHstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.