



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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MEMORANDUM

TO: **VICTORIA P. SIMMONS**
Regulatory Coordinator
Department of Medical Assistance Services

FROM: **USHA KODURU**
Assistant Attorney General

DATE: **July 16, 2004**

SUBJECT: **Emergency Regulation Concerning Increased Emergency Room Evaluation and Management Fees to Physicians**

I have reviewed the attached emergency regulation that increases reimbursements to physicians delivering Medicaid services in hospital emergency rooms.

Based on that review, it is this Office's view that the agency, pursuant to Item 326 (JJJ) of the 2004 Appropriation Act, has the authority to promulgate this regulation, subject to compliance with the provisions of Article 2 of the Administrative Process Act and has not exceeded that authority.

The authority for these emergency actions is found in Va. Code § 2.2-4011, which provides that an "emergency situation" includes "a situation in which Virginia statutory law or the appropriation act . . . requires that a regulation be effective in 280 days or less from its enactment . . ." Item 326 (JJJ) states that DMAS "shall have the authority to amend the State Plan for Medical Assistance to increase reimbursements to physicians delivering services to recipients in hospital emergency rooms effective July 1, 2004. Out of this appropriation, the expenditure of \$140,302 the first year and \$148,719 the second year from the general fund and \$140,302 the first year and \$148,719 the second year from nongeneral funds shall be used to increase reimbursements by two

percent above the fiscal year 2004 level.” Item 326(JJJ) requires that emergency regulations to enact this item of the 2004 Acts of the Assembly be promulgated within 280 days or less from the enactment of the Act.

Provided that H.B. 5001 becomes law, this situation qualifies as an emergency as provided in § 2.2-4011(A)(ii) because the Appropriation Act will then require that these regulations be effective within 280 days of enactment of this provision. Without emergency regulations, the Department would be unable to meet the time frame established by the General Assembly for making this change. As such, these regulations may be adopted without public comment with the prior approval of the Governor.

Accordingly, with the prior approval of the Governor and the passage of H.B. 5001 into law, these regulations will qualify for the “emergency” exemption from Article 2 requirements. Please be advised, however, that under Va. Code § 2.2-4011(A), the Department must state in writing the nature of and necessity for such emergency action, and this appears to have been accomplished in the “Agency Background Document.” In addition, the regulations shall be effective for no more than twelve months. As the Department intends to continue regulating the subject matter governed by this emergency regulation beyond 12 months, it will be necessary to replace these emergency regulations with regulations duly promulgated under Article 2 of the APA. A Notice of Intended Regulatory Action relating to the proposed replacement regulations must be filed with the Registrar within 60 days of the effective date of the emergency regulations (and it appears that this has been done). The proposed replacement regulations must be filed with the Registrar within 180 days after the effective date of the emergency regulations.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to call me at 225-2741.

cc: Kim F. Piner, Esquire

Attachment