

To Those Interested in Medicare Coverage of Erythropoietin:

On September 22, 2003 the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a letter inviting interested parties to send us scientific evidence related to erythropoietin (EPO) dosing and hematocrit/hemoglobin levels that will assist us in the development of a permanent policy to ensure appropriate administration of EPO in End Stage Renal Dialysis (ESRD) patients. The September 22 letter can found at <http://www.cms.gov/coverage/8b1.pdf>.

In order to provide ample time for all interested parties to submit scientific evidence that should be considered in the evaluation of EPO, CMS has decided to extend the period for collection of information. Scientific literature and data from the ESRD community will be accepted until January 15, 2004.

This extension of time to solicit public comment will result in modification of the schedule for the completion of the project. The chart below outlines the new timeline. CMS plans to have a draft policy available for comment on May 1, 2004 with a final policy published by July 1, 2004. The current temporary policy expires August 31, 2004.

Time Period	Activity
September 22, 2003 – January 15, 2004	The public is invited to submit scientific evidence related to EPO dosing and hematocrit/hemoglobin levels. Parties submitting data are invited to also schedule meetings to present data and provide verbal explanations of their analysis if they so desire.
January 16, 2004 – April 16, 2004	CMS staff will analyze data submitted. We may supplement the submittals with data from the USRDS or CMS data sources such as national claims history files, performance measurements, REBUS, etc.
May 1, 2004	CMS will circulate a draft policy for comment.
July 1, 2004	CMS will issue a final revised policy or a memorandum announcing the decision regarding national monitoring of EPO for ESRD patients.