

C. Conclusion

Our impact analysis compared hospice payments by using the FY 2003 wage index to the estimated payments using the FY 2004 wage index. Through the analysis, we estimate that total hospice payments will increase from last year by 0.6 percent or by \$24,271,000. Additionally, we compared estimated payments using the FY 1983 hospice wage index to estimated payments using the FY 2004 wage index and determined the current hospice wage index to be budget neutral, as required by the negotiated rulemaking committee. We have determined that this rule is not an economically significant rule under

Executive Order 12866. Although we believe that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, we took any negative effects into consideration during the negotiated rulemaking process. We have determined that this rule will not have a significant impact on the operations of a substantial number of small rural hospitals. Finally, this rule will not have a consequential effect on State, local, or tribal governments.

OMB Review

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12866, the Office of Management and Budget reviewed this notice.

Authority: Section 1814(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395f (i)(1)).

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.773 Medicare—Hospital Insurance Program; and No. 93.774, Medicare—Supplementary Medical Insurance Program)

Dated: June 24, 2003.

Thomas A. Scully,

Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Dated: July 28, 2003.

Tommy G. Thompson,

Secretary.

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