The information included in this paper is provided as general information only. This information should not be considered complete or dispositive guidance for legal or regulatory compliance. The specific application of laws and regulations to an organization requires a careful consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstances and may require assistance of competent legal counsel.

**Question:** Is the physician’s rubber stamp signature okay to use in California for home health and hospice? No

**Program Integrity Manual Chapter 3.4.1.1 B REVISED**

“B. Signature Requirements
Medicare requires a legible identifier for services provided/ordered. The method used shall be hand written or an electronic signature (stamp signatures are not acceptable) to sign an order or other medical record documentation for medical review purposes.

**NOTED EXCEPTION:** Facsimile of original written or electronic signatures are acceptable for the certifications of terminal illness for hospice.

Providers using electronic systems should recognize that there is a potential for misuse or abuse with alternate signature methods. Facsimile and hard copies of a physician’s electronic signature must be in the patient’s medical record for the certification of terminal illness for hospice. For example, providers need a system and software products which are protected against modification, etc., and should apply administrative procedures which are adequate and correspond to recognized standards and laws. The individual whose name is on the alternate signature method and the provider bears the responsibility for the authenticity of the information being attested to. Physicians should check with their attorneys and malpractice insurers in regard to the use of alternative signature methods.”

**History:**
Prior to 2004 rubber stamps were not allowed. Then, on January 1, 2004, the CMS Program Integrity Manual was revised allowing the acceptance of physician’s rubber stamp signatures. A letter from CMS Survey and Certification Group to all state survey agency directors was issued on July 8, 2004, and confirmed that stamped signatures were acceptable for survey purposes. **However, since that time the Program Integrity Manual has been revised to disallow their use.**