### What is homebound?

To receive Medicare covered home health services, a physician must certify that the patient is confined to his/her home (i.e. homebound). The patient's condition should be such that there is a normal inability to leave home, and consequently, leaving home would require a considerable and taxing effort.

A patient is considered homebound if the following two criteria are met:

**Criteria-One:** The patient must either:
- Because of illness or injury, need the aid of supportive devices or the assistance of another person to leave their place of residence
- OR
- Have a condition such that leaving the home is medically contraindicated.

If the patient meets one of the Criteria-One conditions, then the patient **must ALSO meet the two additional requirements** defined in Criteria-Two.

**Criteria-Two:**
- There must exist a normal inability to leave home;
  - OR
  - Leaving home must require a considerable and taxing effort.

If the patient does leave home, they may still be considered homebound if the absences are infrequent, for short periods, or to receive health care. These may include:

- Attendance at adult day care
- Ongoing outpatient kidney dialysis
- Receive outpatient chemotherapy or radiation

### How is homebound documented?

The homebound status must be documented in the medical record frequently enough to reflect the patient’s current functional status, and at a minimum, at least once per episode.

Homebound documentation should be:
- Updated as the patient’s condition changes
- Supported by diagnosis, symptoms, and/or medical condition
- Consistent in all discipline notes
- Stated in clear, concise, specific, and measureable terms

**Example:** Acceptable documentation of homebound status may be “Beneficiary must use quad cane while ambulating even short distances in the home. Has a very slow, unsteady gait. At times, beneficiary requires assistance of another person to get up and move safely.”

### What is important to remember about homebound?

- Absences from home should be infrequent, and of short duration.
- A patient may have more than one home
- Medical care, special occasions and short times away from home on an infrequent basis do not negate homebound status
- Charting that only contains checkboxes rarely supports homebound status
### Where do I find more information?