

§418.54(a) Standard: Initial assessment

The hospice registered nurse must complete an initial assessment within 48 hours after the election of hospice care in accordance with §418.24 is complete (unless the physician, patient, or representative requests that the initial assessment be completed in less than 48 hours.)

Interpretive Guidelines §418.54(a)

The purpose of the initial assessment is to gather the critical information necessary to treat the patient/family's immediate care needs. The assessment needs to take place in the location where hospice services are being delivered. The initial assessment is not a "meet and greet" visit whereby the hospice introduces itself to the patient/family and begins to evaluate the patient's interest in and appropriateness for hospice care. It must assess the patient's immediate physical, psychosocial, emotional and spiritual status related to the terminal illness and related conditions. The initial assessment is necessary to gather the essential information necessary to begin the plan of care and provide the immediate necessary care and services.

The RN must conduct this initial assessment. Hospices may choose to send a social worker or other discipline along with the RN to complete the initial assessment.

Hospices are free to choose their own method for documenting the initial assessment.
