Act. The Service will decline to appoint a BoI and leave the selection and appointment of a factfinder to the parties to a dispute if both the parties have agreed in writing to their own factfinding procedure which meets the following conditions:

(1) The factfinding procedure must be invoked automatically at a specified time (for example, at contract expiration if no agreement is reached).

(2) It must provide a fixed and determinate method for selecting the impartial factfinder(s).

(3) It must provide that there can be no strike or lockout and no changes in conditions of employment (except by mutual agreement) prior to or during the factfinding procedure and for a period of at least seven days after the factfinding is completed.

(4) It must provide that the factfinder(s) will make a written report to the parties, containing the findings of fact and the recommendations of the factfinder(s) for settling the dispute, a copy of which is sent to the Service. The parties to a dispute who have agreed to such a factfinding procedure should jointly submit a copy of such agreed upon procedure to the appropriate regional office of the Service at as early a date as possible, but in any event prior to the appointment of a BoI by the Service. See §1420.5(f) for the addresses of the regional offices.

(b) Since the Service does not appoint the factfinder under paragraph (a) of this section, the Service cannot pay for such factfinder. In this respect, such deferral by the Service to the parties' own factfinding procedure is different from the use of stipulation agreements between the parties which give to the Service the authority to select and appoint a factfinder at a later date than the date by which a BoI would have to be appointed under the Act. Under such stipulation agreements by which the parties give the Service authority to appoint a factfinder at a later date, the Service can pay for the factfinder. However, in the deferral to the parties' own factfinding procedure, the parties choose their own factfinder and they pay for the factfinder.

§1420.9 FMCS deferral to parties' own private interest arbitration procedures.

(a) The Service will defer to the parties' own privately agreed to interest arbitration procedure and decline to appoint a Board of Inquiry (BoI) as long as the parties' own procedure meets certain conditions so as to satisfy the Service's responsibilities under the Act. The Service will decline to appoint BoI if the parties to a dispute have agreed in writing to their own interest arbitration procedure which meets the following conditions:

(1) The interest arbitration procedure must provide that there can be no strike or lockout and no changes in conditions of employment (except by mutual agreement) during the contract negotiation covered by the interest arbitration procedure and the period of any subsequent interest arbitration proceedings.

(2) It must provide that the award of the arbitrator(s) under the interest arbitration procedure is final and binding on both parties.

(3) It must provide a fixed and determinate method for selecting the impartial interest arbitrator(s).

(4) The interest arbitration procedure must provide for a written award by the interest arbitrator(s).

(b) The parties to a dispute who have agreed to such an interest arbitration procedure should jointly submit a copy of their agreed upon procedure to the appropriate regional office of the Service at as early a date as possible, but in any event prior to the appointment of BoI by the Service. See §1420.5(f) for the addresses of regional offices.

These new regulations are a part of the Service's overall approach to implementing the health care amendments of 1974 in a manner consistent with the Congressional intent of promoting peaceful settlements of labor disputes at our vital health care facilities. The Service will work with the parties in every way possible to be flexible and to tailor its approach so as to accommodate the needs of the parties in the interest of settling the dispute. This was the motivating principle behind these new regulations which permit input by the parties to the Board of Inquiry selection and allow the parties to set up

their own factfinding or arbitration procedures in lieu of the Board of Inquiry procedure. We encourage the parties, both unions and management, to take advantage of these and other options and to work with the Service to tailor their approach and procedures to fit the needs of their bargaining situations.

PART 1425—MEDIATION ASSISTANCE IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE

Sec.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 581(8), 7119, 7134.

SOURCE: 45 FR 62798, Sept. 22, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1425.1 Definitions.

As used in this part:

(a) *The Service* means Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

(b) *Party* or *Parties* means (1) any appropriate activity, facility, geographical subdivision, or combination thereof, of an agency as that term is defined in 5 U.S.C. 7103(3), or (2) a labor organization as that term is defined in 5 U.S.C. 7103(4).

(c) *Third-party mediation assistance* means mediation by persons other than FMCS commissioners.

(d) *Provide its services* means to make the services and facilities of the Service available either on its own motion or upon the special request of one or both of the parties.

§ 1425.2 Notice to the Service of agreement negotiations.

(a) In order that the Service may provide assistance to the parties, the party initiating negotiations shall file a notice with the FMCS Notice Processing Unit, 2100 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20427, at least 30 days prior to the expiration or modification date of an existing agreement, or 30 days prior to the reopener date of an existing agreement. In the case of an initial agreement the notice shall be filed within 30 days after commencing negotiations.

(b) Parties engaging in mid-term or impact and/or implementation bargaining are encouraged to send a notice to FMCS if assistance is desired. Such notice may be sent by either party or may be submitted jointly. In regard to such notices a brief listing should be general in nature e.g., smoking policies, or Alternative Work Schedules (AWS).

(c) Parties requesting grievance mediation must send a request signed by both the union and the agency involved. Receipt of such request does not commit FMCS to provide its services. FMCS has the discretion to determine whether or not to perform grievance mediation, as such service may not be appropriate in all cases.

(d) The guidelines for FMCS grievance mediation are:

(1) The parties shall submit a joint request, signed by both parties requesting FMCS assistance. The parties agree that grievance mediation is a supplement to, and not a substitute for, the steps of the contractual grievance procedure.

(2) The grievant is entitled to be present at the grievance mediation conference.

(3) Any times limits in the parties labor agreement must be waived to permit the grievance to proceed to arbitration should mediation be unsuccessful.

(4) Proceedings before the mediator will be informal and rules of evidence do not apply. No record, stenographic or tape recordings of the meetings will be made. The mediators notes are confidential and content shall not be revealed.

(5) The mediator shall conduct the mediation conference utilizing all of the customary techniques associated with mediation including the use of separate caucuses.

(6) The mediator had no authority to compel resolution of the grievance.

(7) In the event that no settlement is reached during the mediation conference, the mediator may provide the parties either in separate or joint session with an oral advisory opinion.