

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)  
Plain Writing Act Compliance Report  
July 13, 2011**

**I. Senior CMS Official for plain writing:**

- a. Mary Wallace, Deputy Director, Office of Communications
- b. Names of Plain language coordinators within the agency:
  - Heather Holland, Plain Language Contact
  - Erin Gordon, Plain Language Coordinator
  - Cate Kortzeborn, Plain Language Coordinator (Regional Offices)

**II. Inform CMS staff of Plain Writing Act's requirements:**

- a. Posted information on the agency's intranet
- b. Published two articles in the internal agency news bulletin: *This Just In*
- c. Posted a special Administrator's Blog on implications of the Act for CMS, and emailed blog and a link directly to all staff
- d. Hung posters promoting Plain Writing around the agency and distributed electronic flyers for Regional Office staff and to Executive Officers for each component.
- e. Developed and implemented online desktop training for all staff

**III. Training**

- a. CMS provided the following trainings:

Type of training	Percent of Employees Trained	Date
<b>Phase I:</b> CMS-specific online desktop training for all staff	93%*	7/13/11
*Of the 7% remaining, only 310 staff don't have an exception (like being on extended leave).		

**Phase II:**

- Exploring ways to provide targeted, follow-up training for individuals and components who request it
- Incorporating Plain Writing Training into required New Employee Orientation materials
- Developing Plain Writing training for 1-800 MEDICARE Customer Service Representatives

**Survey Results: Agency feedback on training needs**

We are working on the best way to meet these needs as resources allow.

- **160 responses as of 7/11/11**
- **People who asked for more training: 126**

	Headquarters	Regions
Webinar/desktop	38	25
Classroom training	35	12
One-on-one coaching	14	1

<b>Topics Requested</b> (people could choose multiple topics):		
	<b>Headquarters</b>	<b>Regions</b>
Writing technical/ research reports	66	23
Writing letters	49	28
Basic grammar & punctuation	52	18
Crafting effective emails	50	21
Writing for the web	43	11
Other (write in response – contract writing and regulation writing most frequent)	2/3 (contracts/regs)	1 (contracts)

#### **IV. Ongoing compliance/ sustaining change**

- a. Please submit any compliance issues through the feedback form listed on the CMS Plain Language public webpage. We will address how we are handling any compliance issues we get in future reports.
- b. We will be collecting and addressing public comments on plain writing efforts at CMS through our public-facing Plain Language webpage
- c. Incorporating Plain Writing training into required New Employee Orientation materials
- d. Exploring possibility of incentives and awards for projects that incorporate Plain Writing
- e. Developing means of documenting and reporting use of plain writing in agency communications

Document clearance processes vary throughout CMS depending on the product and the procedures of the business owner. The Office of Communications provides plain language reviews for other components upon request.

#### **V. CMS Plain Writing Webpage**

- a. The CMS Plain Language webpage is accessible through the following URLs:
  - [medicare.gov/plainlanguage.html](http://medicare.gov/plainlanguage.html)
  - [medicaid.gov/planlanguage.html](http://medicaid.gov/planlanguage.html)
  - [innovations.cms.gov/plainlanguage.html](http://innovations.cms.gov/plainlanguage.html)
  - [insuredkidsnow.gov/plainlanguage.html](http://insuredkidsnow.gov/plainlanguage.html)
- b. The page explains the importance of the Plain Writing Act and outlines CMS' commitment to full compliance with the Act, along with a pledge to post updated compliance reports detailing our progress.
- c. The public can contact CMS and send comments via the feedback form posted prominently on the page.