

Dated: October 18, 1999.

**A. Stanley Meiburg,**

*Acting Regional Administrator, Region 4.*

[FR Doc. 00-267 Filed 1-6-00; 8:45 am]

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### 40 CFR Part 300

[FRL 6517-4]

#### National Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Contingency Plan; National Priorities List

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule to Delete the D.L. Mud, Inc., Superfund Site from the National Priorities List and Request for Comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 announces its proposal to delete D.L. Mud, Inc., Superfund Site (Site) located in Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, from the National Priorities List (NPL) and requests public comments on this proposed action. The NPL, promulgated pursuant to Section 105 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, as amended, is Appendix B of 40 CFR Part 300 which is the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP). The EPA and the State of Louisiana, through the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), have determined that all appropriate response actions under CERCLA, other than operation and maintenance and five-year reviews, have been completed and that the Site poses no significant threat to public health or the environment. However, this deletion does not preclude future actions under Superfund.

**DATES:** Comments concerning this Site must be received by February 7, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be addressed to: Ms. Janetta Coats, Community Involvement Coordinator, U.S. EPA (6SF-PO), 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, (214) 665-7308 or 1-800-533-3508

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Katrina Higgins, Remedial Project Manager, U.S. EPA (6SF-LP), 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, (214) 665-8143 or 1-800-533-3508 (Toll Free). *Information Repositories:* Repositories have been established to provide detailed information concerning this decision at the following address:

U.S. EPA Region 6 Library, Suite 12D13, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, (214) 665-6524, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; Vermilion Parish Library, 200 North Magdalen Square, Abbeville, Louisiana 70511, (318) 893-2674, Monday and Thursday 9 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; and, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, 7290 Bluebonnet Road, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809, (225) 765-0487, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** For additional information, see the direct final rule to delete which is located in the Rules section of this **Federal Register**.

#### List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 300

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Chemicals, Hazardous waste, Hazardous substances, Intergovernmental relations, Penalties, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Superfund, Water pollution control, Water supply.

**Authority:** 33 U.S.C. 1321(c)(2); 42 U.S.C. 9601-9657; E.O. 12777, 56 FR 54757, 3 CFR, 1991 Comp., p. 351; E.O. 12580, 52 FR 2923; 3 CFR, 1987 Comp., p. 193.

Dated: December 21, 1999.

**Lynda F. Carroll,**

*Acting Regional Administrator,*

*U.S. EPA, Region 6.*

[FR Doc. 00-360 Filed 1-6-00; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### Health Care Financing Administration

#### 42 CFR Part 405

[HCFA-1125-N]

#### Medicare Program; Meetings of the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on the Ambulance Fee Schedule

**AGENCY:** Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), HHS.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with section 10(a) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, this notice announces the dates and locations for the eighth meeting of the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on the Ambulance Fee Schedule. This meeting is open to the public.

The purpose of this committee is to develop a proposed rule that would establish a fee schedule for the payment of ambulance services under the

Medicare program through negotiated rulemaking, as mandated by section 4531(b) of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA '97).

**DATES:** The eighth meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2000 from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., January 25, 2000 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., and January 26, 2000 from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The 3-day January meeting will be held at the Turf Valley Hotel, 2700 Turf Road, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042; (410) 465-1500.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Inquiries regarding these meetings should be addressed to Bob Niemann ((410) 786-4569) or Margot Blige ((410) 786-4642) for general issues related to ambulance services or to Lynn Sylvester ((202) 606-9140) or Elayne Tempel ((207) 780-3408), facilitators.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 4531(b)(2) of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA '97) added a new section 1834(l) to the Social Security Act (the Act) which mandates by January 1, 2000, implementation of a national fee schedule for payment of ambulance services furnished under Medicare Part B. The fee schedule is to be established through negotiated rulemaking. Section 4531(b)(2) of the BBA '97 also provides that, in establishing such fee schedule, the Secretary will—

- Establish mechanisms to control increases in expenditures for ambulance services under Part B of the program;
- Establish definitions for ambulance services that link payments to the type of services furnished;
- Consider appropriate regional and operational differences;
- Consider adjustments to payment rates to account for inflation and other relevant factors; and
- Phase in the fee schedule in an efficient and fair manner.

The Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on the Ambulance Fee Schedule has been established to provide advice and make recommendations to the Secretary with respect to the text and content of a proposed rule that would establish a fee schedule for the payment of ambulance services under Part B of the Medicare program.

The first and second meetings were for organizational purposes solely. There were no significant decisions made in these two meetings.

The Committee held its third meeting on May 24 and 25, 1999. At this meeting, the Committee heard presentations from HCFA staff, including a data presentation. The Committee requested another presentation by HCFA's Office of the

Actuary to obtain clarification about its calculation of the fee schedule payment cap. Additionally, a Medical Issues workgroup was formed.

The Committee held its fourth meeting on June 28 and 29, 1999. At this meeting a presentation was made by a HCFA Office of the Actuary staff member. The presentation clarified that budget neutrality will be evaluated by using all ambulance claims for the most current year and comparing the results of the proposed models with those paid claims. HCFA staff presented more historical Medicare hospital and supplier ambulance billing data. Consensus was reached on one possible basic structure for the fee schedule. HCFA indicated that the fee schedule must be effective as soon as operationally possible after January 1, 2000. Subcommittees were formed to produce, by July 19, 2000 proposals for—

(1) A rural/urban adjustment; and  
(2) A fee schedule model based on the structure agreed to at the June meeting, combined with relative values. These proposals, along with the results of the medical issues workgroup, were to serve as the basis for the Committee's next meeting.

The Committee held its fifth meeting on August 2 and 3, 1999. At this meeting the Committee heard presentations from HCFA staff on the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule's Geographic Practice Cost Index (GPCI) and hospital wage index. The Committee is considering the GPCI and hospital wage index for possible use as a geographic cost adjuster for the ambulance fee schedule. The second presenter, a member of the HCFA negotiated rulemaking team, presented additional historical Medicare hospital and ambulance supplier billing data. The Committee was advised in a letter signed by HCFA's Deputy Administrator, Michael M. Hash, that it has until February 15, 2000 to conclude its business. The Committee reached consensus on the definitions for Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support (ALS) Level-1, ALS Level-2, and the criteria that the service must meet in order for the emergency response modifier amount to be paid. During the October meeting, the Committee planned to work on defining the geographic and rural modifiers and establishing the relative values of the different levels of service.

The seventh meeting of the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee was held December 6 through 8, 1999. The Committee reached consensus on the relative values to be used for the different levels of ambulance service to

be modeled for evaluation purposes. The physicians' fee schedule Geographic Practice Cost Index (practice expense component) will be used as the ambulance fee schedule geographic adjuster. An additional payment will be made for ambulance services if the point of pickup is in a rural area. Rural is defined as a location in a non-MSA (with Goldsmith modification, if possible). An additional payment for an emergency response will be paid if the condition as presented was an emergency condition and the supplier responded "immediately".

The Committee is expected to conclude its work by February 15, 2000. The main items remaining include evaluating the results of the rural modifier and preparing the Committee's official report.

The announced meeting is open to the public without advanced registration. Public attendance at the meeting may be limited to space available. Mail written statements to the following address: Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, 2100 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20427, Attention: Lynn Sylvester. Notice of future meetings will be published in the **Federal Register**. A summary of all proceedings will be available for public inspection in room 443-G of the Department's offices at 200 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC on Monday through Friday of each week from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Phone: (202) 690-7890), and can be accessed through the HCFA Internet site at <http://www.hcfa.gov/medicare/ambmain.htm>. Additional information related to the Committee will also be available on the web site.

**Authority:** Section 1834(l) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m).  
(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.774, Medicare—Supplementary Medical Insurance Program)

Dated: January 4, 2000.

**Nancy-Ann Min DeParle,**

*Administrator, Health Care Financing Administration.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 17

RIN 1018-AF80

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 224

[I.D. 102299A]

RIN 0648-XA39

### Endangered and Threatened Wildlife; Extension of Comment Period and Notice of Public Hearings on Proposed Endangered Status for a Distinct Population Segment of Anadromous Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) in the Gulf of Maine

**AGENCIES:** Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Interior; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; notice of public hearings and extension of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS and FWS (the Services) provide notice to cancel a scheduled public hearing on January 19, 2000, to schedule three new public hearings that will be held on the proposed determination of endangered status for a distinct population segment (DPS) of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) in the Gulf of Maine, and to extend the public comment period on the proposal.

**DATES:** There will be three public hearings. The first will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on January 29, 2000; the second will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on January 31, 2000; and the third will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on February 1, 2000. The public comment period originally closed on February 15, 2000. The Services are extending the public comment period to March 15, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** The January 29, 2000, public hearing will be held at the University of Maine at Machias, 9 O'Brien Avenue, Machias, Maine, in the Performing Arts Center. The January 31, 2000, public hearing will be held at Ellsworth Middle School, 20 Forrest Avenue, Ellsworth, Maine, in the cafeteria. The February 1, 2000, public hearing will be held at the Rockland District Middle School, 30 Broadway, Rockland, Maine, in the cafeteria. Written comments and materials regarding the proposed rule should be