



Center for Medicaid and State Operations/Survey and Certification Group

Ref: S&C-04-41

DATE: August 12, 2004

TO: State Survey Agency Directors
State Fire Authorities

FROM: Director
Survey and Certification Group

SUBJECT: Corridor Width & Corridor Mounted Computer Touch Screens in Health Care
Facilities – Clarification Effective Immediately

Letter Summary

- This letter addresses the issue of corridor mounted computer touch screens and their installation in healthcare facilities.
- Corridor mounted computer touch screens, if properly installed, shall not be considered a corridor obstruction.
- Other items may be considered corridor obstructions.

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) policy regarding corridor width requirements and the installation of computer touch screens in health care facilities. CMS recently received several inquiries concerning the acceptability of corridor mounted touch screens and questions whether or not the touch screens installation interferes with requirements for corridor width in a health care facility. With the anticipated spread in the use of these devices this clarification is applicable to all health care facilities. These computer devices allow input into medical records such as the Minimum Data Set (MDS) or other online patient/resident records. The device in question is approximately 3.5 inches thick and is mounted approximately 60 inches above the floor.

Life Safety Code (LSC) requirements addressing corridor width and means of egress requirements are found at several locations in the LSC.

Section 7.3 of the LSC discusses general requirements:

- This section states that the width of means of egress shall be measured in the clear at the narrowest point of the exit. It has an exception that allows projections of not more than 3.5 inches on each side shall be permitted at 38 in. and below.

This is to allow for the installation of a handrail and for people to use the handrail without impediment.

Sections 18.2.3.3 and 19.2.3.3 if the LSC discuss specific health care requirements:

- These sections define the corridor width in new and existing health care facilities and that the corridor shall be arranged to prevent obstruction to the convenient removal of non-ambulatory persons.

The installation of these devices would not interfere with the overall corridor width requirements of the LSC and are permitted if the device when installed did not extend out from the corridor wall in excess of 3.5 inches. Locating the device at least 60 or more inches above the floor will prevent interference with individuals using the handrail along the corridor wall. No chairs, tables, filling cabinets or carts can be placed around these devices or in the corridor where these devices are installed which would reduce the width of the corridor to less than the width the corridor was originally constructed. In use (not left unattended for more than 30minutes) items such as linen carts, medication carts and janitorial equipment would not be included in these exclusions. Infection control supply cabinets outside of a specific room are allowed in the corridor while precautions are enforce for that room. Crash carts are allowed in the corridor for quick access in an emergency.

To evaluate compliance with these requirements, the surveyor should verify that:

- The computer monitor does not extend out more than 3.5 inches from the wall and is located at least 60 inches above the floor;
- No chairs, tables, filling cabinets or carts are located in the corridor where these devices have been mounted;
- The original corridor width has not been diminished by any chairs, tables, filling cabinets or any not in use carts or janitorial equipment or devices affixed to the wall that exceed 3.5 inches in thickness.

If you have further questions regarding this matter, please contact James Merrill at (410) 786-6998.

Effective Date: The information contained in this memorandum is current policy and is in effect for all healthcare facilities. Please ensure distribution by August 31, 2004.

Training: This clarification should be shared with all survey and certification staff, fire authorities, surveyors, their managers, and the state/RO training coordinator.

/s/
Thomas E. Hamilton

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management