Episode Summary:
Acute/Post-acute Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

Arkansas Health Care Payment Improvement Initiative

I. What is the CHF episode, and how will the episode model encourage more effective and efficient care?

Congestive heart failure (CHF) affects a significant number of Arkansans and represents an opportunity to improve quality, patient experience and efficiency. In Arkansas, CHF accounts for 3 percent of Medicare, 1.2 percent of commercial, and 0.4 percent of Medicaid spending. There were 11,434 hospital discharges for CHF in 2009. Among Arkansas Medicare patients, 24 percent of hospitalized patients will be re-admitted within 30 days. This is higher than national average. Finally, increased use of evidence-based therapies could save the lives of up to 700 Arkansans each year.

CHF can be acute, subacute or chronic. The CHF episode focuses on acute CHF exacerbations that result in hospitalization and post-acute follow-up care. The episode aims to improve coordination and effectiveness by extending the hospital's accountability beyond discharge. In so doing, the episode will reward lower readmission rates and improved patient education, transitions, and quality.

II. Key features of the CHF episode

- **Episode definition:** The episode focuses on acute and post-acute CHF care, defined as the CHF hospitalization and the 30 days following discharge, including readmissions. All facility services, inpatient professional services, emergency department visits, observation, and post-acute care as well as any CHF-related outpatient labs and diagnostics, outpatient costs and medications are included.

- **Principal Accountable Provider:** The hospital for the initial inpatient admission will be the Principal Accountable Provider (PAP), given the hospital's critical role in discharge education and planning.

- **Quality measures:** In order to participate in upside savings, providers are required to pass a quality metric related to the number of patients with left ventricular systolic dysfunction (LVSD) receiving an ACE-inhibitor or ARB therapy. PAPs will also receive reports highlighting performance on additional quality measures (e.g., outpatient follow-ups) for CHF care.

- **Adjustments and exclusions:** The CHF episode will exclude patients younger than 18, inpatient deaths, patients who leave the hospital against medical advice, and patients with significant co-morbid conditions (e.g., LVAD, dialysis).

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1. HCUPnet  
2. Medicare FFS claims data, 2010  