

one of the following phrases to the certification:

(1) "if HCFA issues a favorable advisory opinion."

(2) "if HCFA and the OIG issue favorable advisory opinions."

[63 FR 1656, Jan. 9, 1998]

**§411.375 Fees for the cost of advisory opinions.**

(a) *Initial payment.* Parties must include with each request for an advisory opinion submitted through December 31, 1998, a check or money order payable to HCFA for \$250. For requests submitted after this date, parties must include a check or money order in this amount, unless HCFA has revised the amount of the initial fee in a program issuance, in which case, the requestor must include the revised amount. This initial payment is nonrefundable.

(b) *How costs are calculated.* Before issuing the advisory opinion, HCFA calculates the costs the Department has incurred in responding to the request. The calculation includes the costs of salaries, benefits, and overhead for analysts, attorneys, and others who have worked on the request, as well as administrative and supervisory support for these individuals.

(c) *Agreement to pay all costs.* (1) By submitting the request for an advisory opinion, the requestor agrees, except as indicated in paragraph (c)(3) of this section, to pay all costs the Department incurs in responding to the request for an advisory opinion.

(2) In its request for an advisory opinion, the requestor may designate a triggering dollar amount. If HCFA estimates that the costs of processing the advisory opinion request have reached or are likely to exceed the designated triggering dollar amount, HCFA notifies the requestor.

(3) If HCFA notifies the requestor that the actual or estimated cost of processing the request has reached or is likely to exceed the triggering dollar amount, HCFA stops processing the request until the requestor makes a written request for HCFA to continue. If HCFA is delayed in processing the request for an advisory opinion because of this procedure, the time within which HCFA must issue an advisory opinion is suspended until the re-

questor asks HCFA to continue working on the request.

(4) If the requestor chooses not to pay for HCFA to complete an advisory opinion, or withdraws the request, the requestor is still obligated to pay for all costs HCFA has identified as costs it incurred in processing the request for an advisory opinion, up to that point.

(5) If the costs HCFA has incurred in responding to the request are greater than the amount the requestor has paid, HCFA, before issuing the advisory opinion, notifies the requestor of any additional amount that is due. HCFA does not issue an advisory opinion until the requestor has paid the full amount that is owed. Once the requestor has paid HCFA the total amount due for the costs of processing the request, HCFA issues the advisory opinion. The time period HCFA has for issuing advisory opinions is suspended from the time HCFA notifies the requestor of the amount owed until the time HCFA receives full payment.

(d) *Fees for outside experts.* (1) In addition to the fees identified in this section, the requestor also must pay any required fees for expert opinions, if any, from outside sources, as described in §411.377.

(2) The time period for issuing an advisory opinion is suspended from the time that HCFA notifies the requestor that it needs an outside expert opinion until the time HCFA receives that opinion.

[63 FR 1656, Jan. 9, 1998]

**§411.377 Expert opinions from outside sources.**

(a) HCFA may request expert advice from qualified sources if HCFA believes that the advice is necessary to respond to a request for an advisory opinion. For example, HCFA may require the use of accountants or business experts to assess the structure of a complex business arrangement or to ascertain a physician's or immediate family member's financial relationship with entities that provide designated health services.

(b) If HCFA determines that it needs to obtain expert advice in order to issue a requested advisory opinion, HCFA notifies the requestor of that