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By Nina Youngstrom

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Any moment now, CMS will release guidance on the co-location of space and services at provider-based departments, a persistent compliance challenge for some hospitals, and it will focus on health and safety, a CMS official said. The guidance will probably say that provider-based departments are permitted to share some space with freestanding clinics, such as waiting rooms, elevators and bathrooms, without jeopardizing their provider-based status.

"It's hard to justify that's a risk to health and safety," said David Wright, acting deputy director of the CMS Center for Clinical Standards and Quality, March 21 at the Institute on Medicare and Medicaid Payment Issues sponsored by the American Health Lawyers Association in Baltimore. Other aspects