

To: Health Advocates
From: Jane Perkins, National Health Law Program
Date: Sept. 27, 2002

Question and Answer RE: Deference Owed to State Medicaid Manual and Federal Letters

Question : Our office is involved in State Medicaid Manual and its interpretation of Medicaid

Answer : The court should give these guidance documents some deference, depending

Discussion: The Supreme Court has struggled to clarify the standards Medicaid requires

[\[1\]](#)

[\[2\]](#)

In recent years, the Court has taken steps to narrow application. In *Christensen v. Harris County*

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[\[5\]](#)

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In *U.S. v. Mead Corporation* [\[8\]](#) the Court discussed the Chevron

We hold that administrative implementation of a federal statute by an agency is entitled to deference

In other words, *Chevron* deference is limited to agency interpretations of the

[11]

The Court then looked to *Skidmore* whether the tariff ruling was entitled to “some deference” under the *Chenery* test.^[12] *Skidmore* ^[13]

Chevron did nothing to eliminate *Skidmore*’s holding.^[14]

Not surprisingly, courts already are applying the deference standard to administrative actions.^[15] The Supreme Court is off to the races.^[16]
^[17]

The Tenth Circuit recently *State Medicaid Manual* about must give deference to *Skidmore* does not conflict with the *Skidmore*.^[19]
^[20]
^[21]

[1] 467 U.S. 837 (1984).

[2] 467 U.S. at 844-45.

[3] 529 U.S. 576, 587 (2000).

[4] *Id.* at 587.

[5] *Id.* (quoting *Skidmore v. Swift*, 323 U.S. 134, 140 (1944)).

[6] 323 U.S. 134 (1944).

[7] *Id.* at 140.

[8] 121 S.Ct. 2164 (2001).

[9] *Id.* at 2171.

[10] *Id.*

[11] *Id.* at 2173-2176.

[12] *Id.* at 2175.

[13] *Id.* at 2177-89.

[14] *Id.* at 2175-76. For an interesting post-case, see *Bar*

[15] Numerous cases, pre-*Mead*, accord deference to the federal Medicaid agency.

[16] *Brumer v. Wisconsin Dept. of Social Services*, 122 U.S. 962 (2001).

[17] 286 F.3d 476 (7th Cir. 2002).

[18] See *Ramey v. Reinertson*, 268 F.3d 955 (10th Cir. 2001).

[19] 648 N.W.2d 95 (Iowa 2002).

[20] 166 F. Supp. 2d 42 (D.N.J. 2001) (citations omitted).

[21] *Grey Bear v. N.D. Dep't of Human Services*, 2002 N.D. 389, 648 N.W.2d __, 2002 WL 1941356 (N.D. Aug. 23, 2002).