



CMS LiveWire

✧ E-News for Office Administrative Personnel ✧

Health Care Financing Division
Colorado Medical Society

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
Send us your comments,
ideas for articles, and
coding/billing tips &
tricks.

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Only 161 more days
until May 23, 2007!
Do you have your NPI?

Feel free to share this in-
formation, but please ac-
knowledge the source.

Medicare Physician Payment Cuts Prevented

On Dec. 9 Congress passed legislation to prevent a scheduled 5 percent cut in 2007 Medicare physician payments, and instead freeze payment rates for one year. Read the AMA's [press release](#). *Editor's Note: Bills in the House and Senate were passed freezing the 2007 conversion factor at the 2006 rate (\$39.8975). Additional provisions of the 2007 Final Rule will be published in the January CMS LiveWire.*

Announcing Medical Practice Advocacy (MPA) Changes

In the August newsletter we indicated that we were undertaking a re-evaluation of our current MPA activities, and you might wonder - Why? One of CMS' banner goals is to restore and preserve economic viability of medical practice across all specialties and practice settings, in other words to ensure Practice Viability. It is our intent that the MPA activities directly support this goal, however, we felt that we were not completely on target. The challenge is how to best serve the approximately 6,800 CMS members and their staff with existing resources.

The current activities can be broken down into two main categories, advocacy (one-on-one claims) and education. Advocacy consumes 80% or more of our available resources, but only reaches 2% of the CMS members. Education activities, on the other hand, serve a much wider audience through the newsletter and quarterly meetings. The results of our re-evaluation were presented at the CMS Annual Meeting in September in breakout sessions for the general membership. The result of these sessions was an agreement that the emphasis had to be switched from one-on-one claims advocacy to more education and empowerment. They want CMS to act as a clearinghouse of information. [Click here](#) to see the 2007 MPA Redesign plan.

Beginning January 2007 we will no longer be accepting or acting upon Claims Resolution Assistance forms. If you have a claim question or problem that you can't get resolved you can contact us by e-mail for a [Second Opinion](#). During the first quarter of 2007 we will be enhancing our Web site to include an interactive Q & A forum specifically for office staff to aid in trouble-shooting issues, more details to follow...

Additionally, we will be developing more educational programs, resources and increasing our use of technology to reach more people. The first step we will take in this direction is the introduction of monthly one-hour teleconference programs. On Tuesday, January 16th at noon we will host our first Brown Bag program and feature a presentation on the Practical Application of the NPI. (*See announcement on Pg 2.*)

Please let us know if you have suggestions on how to make our MPA activities more meaningful to you and your practice.

Pre-Existing Delays

A resolution was passed at the CMS annual meeting this past September that calls for us to seek legislative relief requiring health plans to notify physicians at the time of service if the patient is not covered for specific pre-existing conditions. This resolution envisions some type of real-time eligibility verification system, either online or over the telephone, that would allow the physician's staff to determine if the patient was going to be financially liable for the service before he or she leaves the office. [Continued....](#)



**Happy Holidays
From Your Friends
at CMS!**

December Meetings with the Health Plans a Hit!

Questions submitted to the health plans with their responses will be published in the January issue of **CMS LiveWire**.

Stay Tuned!

"BROWN BAG" TELECONFERENCES



CMS is pleased to announce the first in a series of educational 1-hour lunch hour teleconference meetings for Administrative Staff.

Join us Tuesday, January 16, 2007, for "The Practical Application of NPI". Gail Dize, (The Other) CMS Policy & Outreach, & Joan Elfeld, MPSS, Inc., will share straightforward, no nonsense advice on navigating the NPI maze.

Watch your email for details!

Commercial Insurance Updates

Aetna -

Coding Change - Aetna will begin reprocessing previously denied claims for UA dipstick and pulse oximetry codes that were billed with an E/M code appended with modifier -25 for dates of service on or after 5/1/06. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Anthem -

Medicare Secondary Claims Not Crossing Over Electronically - Earlier this year, there was an issue with the system software that electronically processes Medicare secondary claims. The problem was identified in early June and corrected it in early July. However, during our seminars many providers expressed concern that the issue still exists. Of the claims we researched as examples, all dates of service were in the June-July timeframe. If you have claims with a more current date of service that still aren't crossing over electronically, please contact your Medicare intermediary to determine why the claim didn't cross over. [Click here](#) to access this article & more in the December *Network Update*.

UnitedHealthcare -

Release of Version 3.0 of UnitedHealth Premium Designation Postponed - United sent an email [message](#) to all physicians advising them that the new PDP designations have been postponed. They are being reworked and new letters will go out in early 2007. Physicians will have time to review the information before the ratings are made public.

One Final Reminder Before the New Year... Beginning January 1, 2007, UnitedHealthcare's laboratory service provider network will include a national provider, LabCorp, along with more than 1,500 local and regional providers. Please refer your patients who are UnitedHealthcare members only to network labs. For a list of 2007 participating laboratories, visit the 2007 Lab Locator at <http://www.myuhc.com>.

Medicaid Update

Synagis Immune Globulin - Synagis (Palivizumab) is used to prevent serious lower respiratory tract disease caused by Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in pediatric patients at high risk for RSV disease. Synagis is administered by intramuscular injections, at 15 mg per kg of body weight, once a month during expected periods of RSV frequency in the community. [Click here](#) for coverage guidelines.

Medicare Update

Intranasal Influenza Vaccine Coverage - NAS has received many calls from providers and beneficiaries regarding coverage of the intranasal influenza vaccine. The intranasal influenza vaccine is marketed under the name "FluMistTM". The AMA's CPT provides a code for this service: 90660, influenza virus vaccine, live, for intranasal use. [Click here](#) for coverage information.

Initial Obs Care for Patients Seen the Next Day - NAS has noted that there is confusion regarding appropriate coding when a patient is admitted to observation status, but is not examined by the attending physician until the day following admission to observation status. [Click here](#) for instructions.

Miscellaneous

MDL Settlement Update - The WellPoint, Inc. (Anthem) settlement became effective September 28, 2006. The WellPoint (Anthem) checks were distributed on November 17, 2006 to physicians who submitted a proof of claim form. The payout as a result of WellPoint's settlement resulted in a distribution of over \$134,017,000 to physicians and 302 awards totaling over \$250,000 was routed to requested Foundations. Visit the [AMA-PSA](#) Web site to access the document, *How the Well-Point/Anthem Settlement Agreement helps the physician practice*. - AMA PSA 120106

Just For Fun - A note on the soda machine in our break room warned, "Diet cola isn't working." Beneath that, someone else had written, "Try exercise and a low-carb diet." - *Reader's Digest - January 2007*



COLORADO MEDICAL SOCIETY

"Advocating excellence in the profession of medicine."