



Related MLN Matters Article #: MM3935

Date Posted: July 29, 2005

Related CR #: 3935

### *New Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Modifier*

#### Key Words

MM3935, CR3935, 608, HPSA, Modifier

#### Provider Types Affected

Physicians and critical access hospitals (CAHs), which must be located in an HPSA, that provide services in health professional shortage areas and bill Medicare carriers and intermediaries for those services

#### Key Points

- The effective date of the instruction is January 1, 2006.
- The implementation date is January 3, 2006.
- The modifiers, QB and QU, currently used on claims qualifying for the HPSA bonus payments, will be deleted **on January 1, 2006**, and one new modifier, AQ, created for HPSA.
- The modifier, AQ, replaces the existing modifiers, QB and QU, for physician services provided in HPSAs.
- Claims with dates of service **prior to January 1, 2006** must continue to use the current modifiers QB and QU.
- There will no longer be a distinction between physicians providing HPSA services in a rural area (QB) and physicians providing HPSA services in an urban area (QU).
- The physician or CAH must still submit a QB or QU modifier to receive payment for claims with dates of service **prior to January 1, 2006** for services rendered in zip code areas:
  - That do not fall within a designated full county HPSA;
  - That are not considered to fall within the county based on a determination of dominance made by the United States Postal Service; or
  - That are partially within a non-full county HPSA.

## Important Links

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/MM3935.pdf>

The official instruction issued to carriers and intermediaries may be found by going to <http://cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R608CP.pdf> on the CMS website.

Additional information on the HPSA bonus and the physician scarcity area bonus can be found at [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/01\\_overview.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/01_overview.asp) on the CMS website.

The Guide for Using the HPSA/PSA Web Page can be viewed by going to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/Downloads/instructions.pdf> on the CMS website.