



News Flash - The revised *Guidelines for Teaching Physicians, Interns, and Residents* (July 2008), which provides information about payment for physician services in teaching settings, general documentation guidelines, and evaluation and management documentation guidelines, is now available in downloadable format from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Medicare Learning Network at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/gdelinesteachgresfctsh.pdf> on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website.

MLN Matters Number: MM6212

Related Change Request (CR) #: 6212

Related CR Release Date: October 24, 2008

Effective Date: July 1, 2008

Related CR Transmittal #: R3890TN

Implementation Date: October 24, 2008, unless otherwise noted below

New 2008 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) Payment Rates Effective for Dates of Service July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2008

Provider Types Affected

Physicians, providers, and suppliers submitting claims to Medicare contractors (carriers, Fiscal Intermediaries (FIs), Part A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MACs), and/or Regional Home Health Intermediaries (RHHIs)) for services provided to Medicare beneficiaries and paid under the MPFS

Provider Action Needed



STOP – Impact to You

This article is based on Change Request (CR) 6212, which announces the new 2008 MPFS payment rates effective for dates of service July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2008. Please note that Medicare contractors have already implemented the actions annotated in this article.



CAUTION – What You Need to Know

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) directed Medicare contractors to revert back to the 0.5 percent payment rates that were previously in place until June 30, 2008, and to use those rates through December 31, 2008. In

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addition, carriers/Part B MACs are using the same rates as used for January 1 through June 30, 2008, to make payments, where appropriate, to Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASCs) for services rendered from July 1 through December 31, 2008. This reflects a continuation of the payment policy for brachytherapy services at carrier/Part B MAC-priced amounts and the prospective rates for other ASC services. CMS also provided revised fees for selected mental health codes that had an increase in their fee schedule amounts. The effective date for the increase for the mental health codes was for dates of service on and after July 1, 2008.



GO – What You Need to Do

See the Background and Additional Information Sections of this article for further details regarding these changes.

Background

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPPA) was enacted on July 15, 2008. The -10.6 percent Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) that took effect on July 1, 2008, was changed back to the January-June 2008 rates, which reflect an update of 0.5 percent. CMS directed **Medicare contractors** to revert back to the 0.5 percent payment files that were previously in place until June 30, 2008. The new MPFS rates are retroactive to July 1, 2008.

Consistent with the new legislation, **carriers/Part B MACs** are using the same fees as used for January 1 through June 30, 2008, to make payments to **ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs)** for July 1 through December 31, 2008. Those fees reflect the continuation of the payment policy for brachytherapy services at carrier/Part B MAC-priced amounts and the prospective rates for other ASC services.

Fiscal intermediaries/Part A MACs also have reverted back to the fees that were in effect from January 1, 2008, through June 30, 2008.

In addition, based on the new legislation, CMS provided Medicare contractors with new revised **fees for selected mental health codes** that had an increase in their fee schedule amounts. The effective date for the increase for the mental health codes was for dates of service on and after July 1, 2008, and Medicare contractors are currently paying the new fees.

After Medicare contractors began paying claims at the new rates, they began to identify any MPFS claims that were paid at the -10.6 percent rate for dates of service on and after July 1, 2008. Contractors are in the process of automatically adjusting those claims, and must complete the adjustments no later than September 30, 2008.

There may be some claims that cannot be automatically adjusted. Under the Medicare statute, Medicare pays the lower of submitted charges or the Medicare fee schedule amount. Claims with dates of service July 1, 2008, and later billed with a submitted

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charge at least at the level of the January 1 through June 30, 2008, fee schedule amount will be automatically reprocessed. Any lesser amount requires providers to contact their local contractor for direction on obtaining adjustments. Non-participating physicians who submitted unassigned claims at the reduced non-participation amount also will need to request an adjustment.

Contractors are following the normal process for transmitting the adjusted claims to supplemental insurers, where appropriate. Contractors disclosed the new MPFS rates on their websites by July 23, 2008.

Additional Information

The official instruction, CR 6212, issued to your carrier, FI, A/B MAC, and RHHI regarding this change may be viewed at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R389OTN.pdf> on the CMS website.

If you have any questions, please contact your carrier, FI, A/B MAC, or RHHI at their toll-free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip> on the CMS website.

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