

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



News Flash –

NEW product(s) from the Medicare Learning Network® (MLN)

- [“Medicare Ambulance Services”](#), Booklet, ICN 903194, Downloadable and Hard Copy

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MLN Matters® Number: MM7558 **Revised**

Related Change Request (CR) #: 7558

Related CR Release Date: October 13, 2011

Effective Date: January 18, 2012

Related CR Transmittal #: R2318CP

Implementation Date: January 18, 2012

Updates to the Internet Only Manual Publication 100-04, Chapter 15 – Ambulance to include Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act of 2010 (MMEA) Provisions

Note: This article was revised on October 18, 2011, to reflect a revised Change Request (CR) 7558. The CR was revised to include additional portions of Section 20.1.4 (Pub. 100-04). The effective and implementation dates were also changed. The transmittal number, CR release date and link to the transmittal were also changed. All other information remains unchanged.

Provider Types Affected

This article is for ambulance providers/suppliers submitting claims to Medicare contractors (carriers, Fiscal Intermediaries (FIs), and/or A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MACs)) for ambulance services provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

What You Need to Know

Change Request (CR) 7558 updates Chapter 15 of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) “Medicare Claims Processing Manual” to include the

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correct extension dates per the MMEA. CR7558 instructs contractors to ensure that they are in compliance with the instructions found in Chapter 15 of the “Medicare Claims Processing Manual”.

The MMEA of 2010 extends the increase in the ambulance fee schedule amounts for covered ground ambulance transports which originated in rural areas by 3 percent and for covered ground ambulance transports which originated in urban areas by 2 percent through December 31, 2011.

The MMEA of 2010 also extends the “super-rural” bonus an additional year, through December 31, 2011.

Background

Urban and Rural Ambulance Payment Extensions

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPAA) provided for an increase in the ambulance fee schedule amounts for covered ground ambulance transports which originated in rural areas by three percent and for covered ground ambulance transports which originated in urban areas by two percent. These increases were only applicable for claims with dates of service July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2009. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 reinstated these provisions to on or after January 1, 2010.

Subsequently, the MMEA again extended the payment add-ons an additional year through December 31, 2011.

“Super-Rural” Ambulance Payment Extension

In addition, Section 414 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) specified that, for services furnished during the period July 1, 2004, through December 31, 2009, the payment amount for the ground ambulance base rate was increased where the ambulance transport originated in a rural area included in those areas comprising the lowest 25th percentile of all rural populations arrayed by population density. For this purpose, rural areas included Goldsmith areas (a type of rural census tract). Approximately half of all rural areas (rural counties plus Goldsmith areas) were required to include 25 percent of the rural population arrayed in order of population density. The amount of this increase was based on the Secretary’s estimate of the ratio of the average cost per trip for the rural areas comprised of the lowest quartile of population arrayed by density compared to the average cost per trip for the rural areas comprised of the highest quartile of population arrayed by density.

CMS determined that the amount of this increase was equal to 22.6 percent. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 reinstated this provision for claims with dates of service on or after January 1, 2010, and before January 1, 2011, using

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the percentage increase that was applicable under this provision for ambulance services during 2009.

Subsequently, the MMEA again extended the rural bonus an additional year, through December 31, 2011.

Additional Information

The official instruction, CR7558, issued to your A/B MAC, FI, or carrier regarding this change may be viewed at <http://www.cms.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R2318CP.pdf> on the CMS website. If you have any questions, please contact your A/B MAC, FI, or carrier at their toll-free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip> on the CMS website.

To review the CMS one-stop resource focused on the informational needs and interests of Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) ambulance suppliers, you may go to <http://www.cms.gov/AmbulanceFeeSchedule/> on the CMS website.

An Ambulance Fact Sheet is also available at http://cms.gov/mlnproducts/downloads/ambulancefeesched_508.pdf on the CMS website.

News Flash –Vaccinate Early to Protect Against the Flu /2011-2012 Influenza Vaccine Prices Are Now Available

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccination as the most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Remind your patients that annual vaccination is recommended for optimal protection. Under Medicare Part B, Medicare pays for the flu vaccine and its administration for seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries with no co-pay or deductible. Take advantage of each office visit and start protecting your patients as soon as your 2011-2012 seasonal flu vaccine arrives. And don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff. Get the Flu Vaccination – Not the Flu.

CMS has posted the 2011-2012 seasonal influenza vaccine payment limits at: http://www.CMS.gov/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/10_VaccinesPricing.asp on the CMS website.

Influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D-covered drug. For information about Medicare's coverage of the influenza vaccine, its administration, and educational resources for healthcare professionals and their staff, visit http://www.CMS.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp on the CMS website

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