



News Flash – The Medicare Learning Network now has Tip Sheets available with important information on the EHR incentive programs. One tip sheet provides user friendly information about incentive payment amounts and describes how they are calculated for fee for service and Medicare Advantage providers. Another provides information on eligibility, timeframes, and maximum payments for the EHR, PQRI, and E-Prescribing program. These Tip Sheets are available at

<http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/index.html> on the CMS EHR Incentive Programs website. Select the Medicare Eligible Professional tab on the left, and then scroll to “Downloads.”

MLN Matters Number: SE1026

Related Change Request (CR) #: N/A

Related CR Release Date: N/A

Effective Date: N/A

Related CR Transmittal #: N/A

Implementation Date: N/A

Important News about Flu Shot Frequency for Medicare Beneficiaries

Note: This article was updated on August 21, 2012, to reflect current Web addresses. All other content remains the same.

Provider Types Affected

This article is for physicians, providers, and suppliers providing flu shot services to Medicare beneficiaries.

What You Need to Know

This article provides important information to physicians and other providers regarding the frequency of allowable flu vaccinations for Medicare beneficiaries.

Background

Effective for services furnished on or after May 1, 1993, the Medicare Part B program covers influenza virus vaccine and its administration when furnished in compliance with any applicable State law by any provider of services or any entity enrolled in the Medicare program. Typically, one vaccine is allowable per

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influenza virus season (once a year in the fall or winter). Medicare will pay for more than one influenza virus vaccination per influenza season if a physician determines and documents in the patient's medical record that the additional vaccination is reasonable and medically necessary. Medicare beneficiaries may receive the vaccine once each influenza season, paid by Medicare, without a physician's order and without the supervision of a physician. A patient could receive an influenza virus vaccine *twice* in a calendar year and Medicare will pay for both. For example, a beneficiary may receive an influenza virus vaccination in January 2010 and another influenza virus vaccination in November 2010.

Medicare Billing for Flu Vaccines

Because Medicare beneficiaries generally fall into a high-risk category, they are being encouraged to obtain the flu vaccine every flu season. Beneficiaries can receive a flu vaccine from any licensed physician or provider. However, for Medicare payment of the vaccine and its administration, beneficiaries should obtain their vaccinations from a Medicare-enrolled physician/provider.

If you are a Medicare-enrolled physician or provider (including centralized billers) and have the flu vaccine available, you must bill Medicare for the cost of the vaccination and its administration. Medicare beneficiaries do not pay any deductible or coinsurance. Please remember that Medicare allows for roster billing when you administer the flu vaccine to a number of beneficiaries at one location (e.g., a physician's office).

Additional Information

The specific rules to follow for roster billing can be found in Chapter 18, Section 10.3 of the Medicare Claims Processing Manual at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/clm104c18.pdf> on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website.

If you do not have the vaccine available, you should refer your patients to 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048) or to <http://www.medicare.gov> where they can get the phone number for their state health department. Health departments throughout the United States are attempting to ensure that as many high-risk individuals as possible will get a flu vaccine.

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