

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



**News Flash -**

REVISED product from the Medicare Learning Network® (MLN)

[“Contractor Entities At A Glance: Who May Contact You About Specific Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Activities,”](#) Educational Tool, ICN 906983, Downloadable

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## Medicare Guidance Regarding Meningitis Outbreak

### Provider Types Affected

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This MLN Matters® Special Edition Article is intended for physicians, providers and suppliers submitting claims to Medicare contractors (Fiscal Intermediaries (FIs), carriers, Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) and A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MACs)) for services to Medicare beneficiaries.

### What You Need to Know

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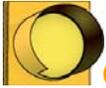


#### **STOP – Impact to You**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is providing direction to Medicare contractors based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) interim treatment guidance for Central Nervous System (CNS). This guidance is also related to parameningeal infections and septic arthritis associated with contaminated steroid products produced by the New England Compounding Center (NECC). This guidance is available on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/clinicians/index.html> on the Internet.

#### Disclaimer

This article was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This article may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents. CPT only copyright 2011 American Medical Association.



### CAUTION – What You Need to Know

The CDC recommends diagnostic and therapeutic activities for symptomatic patients. Therefore, CMS believes that, aside from oral drugs, items and services to diagnose and treat patients who have received contaminated medications qualify for the Medicare Part A or Part B benefit.

CMS urges all Medicare contractors to review the CDC website at [http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/clinicians/faq\\_meningitis\\_outbreak.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/clinicians/faq_meningitis_outbreak.html) regularly for updates and specific actions they should take to ensure timely access to CDC recommended items and services.

Due to the severity of this situation, CMS advises providers that Medicare contractors are expected to expedite all coverage determination requests for these items and services to include antifungal medication.

The CDC has identified the following states as having received potentially-contaminated steroid products:

California	Michigan	Pennsylvania
Connecticut	Minnesota	Rhode Island
Florida	Nevada	South Carolina
Georgia	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Idaho	New Jersey	Texas
Illinois	New York	Virginia
Indiana	North Carolina	West Virginia
Maryland	Ohio	

While clinics in these states received contaminated products, patients in additional states may be affected. Check the CDC's Multistate Fungal Meningitis Outbreak Investigation web page regularly for the latest news and information about the outbreak. The website is available at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/clinicians/faq\\_meningitis\\_outbreak.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/clinicians/faq_meningitis_outbreak.html) on the Internet.



### GO – What You Need to Do

Make sure that your medical and billing staffs are aware of this guidance.

## Additional Information

If you have any questions, please contact your FI, carrier, DME MAC or A/B MAC at their toll-free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Monitoring-Programs/provider-compliance-interactive-map/index.html> on the CMS website.

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**Vaccination is the Best Protection Against the Flu — Influenza Vaccine Prices Are Now Available** [\[↑\]](#)

Each office visit is an opportunity to check your patients' seasonal influenza (flu) and pneumonia immunization status and to start protecting your patients as soon as your 2012-2013 seasonal flu vaccine arrives. Ninety percent of flu-related deaths and more than half of flu-related hospitalizations occur in people age 65 and older. Seniors also have an increased risk of getting pneumonia, a complication of the flu. Remind your patients that seasonal flu vaccinations and a pneumococcal vaccination are recommended for optimal protection. Medicare provides coverage for one seasonal influenza virus vaccine per influenza season for all Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare generally provides coverage of pneumococcal vaccination and its administration once in a lifetime for all Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare may provide coverage of additional pneumococcal vaccinations based on risk or uncertainty of beneficiary pneumococcal vaccination status. Medicare provides coverage for these vaccines and their administration with no co-pay or deductible. And don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff. *Know what to do about the flu.*

Remember – Influenza vaccine plus its administration and pneumococcal vaccine plus its administration are covered Part B benefits. Influenza vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine are NOT Part D-covered drugs. CMS has posted the 2012-2013 [Seasonal Influenza Vaccines Pricing](#). You may also refer to the [MLN Matters® Article #MM8047](#), "Influenza Vaccine Payment Allowances - Annual Update for 2012-2013 Season."

For more information on coverage and billing of the flu vaccine and its administration, please visit the [CMS Medicare Learning Network® Preventive Services Educational Products](#) and [CMS Immunizations](#) web pages. And, while some providers may offer the flu vaccine, others can help their patients locate a vaccine provider within their local community. [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#) is a free, online service where users can search for locations offering flu vaccines.

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