



News Flash - Your Medicare Payments Could Be Reduced If The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Needs To Collect Overdue Taxes That You Owe - The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, Section 1024, authorizes the IRS to reduce certain federal payments, including Medicare payments, to allow collection of overdue taxes. Should you owe such taxes and your payments are reduced, your remittance advice will reflect a provider level adjustment code (PLB) of "WU" in the PLB03-1 data field. For more information, please see MLN Matters Article #MM6125 available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/MM6125.pdf> on the CMS website.

MLN Matters Number: MM6206 **Revised**

Related Change Request (CR) #: 6206

Related CR Release Date: December 12, 2008

Effective Date: July 1, 2008

Related CR Transmittal #: R4140TN

Implementation Date: January 12, 2009

Improved Access to Ambulance Services Payment Rates for Effective Dates of Service July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2009

Note: This article was revised on November 8, 2011, to add a reference to MLN Matters® article MM7558 (<http://www.cms.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/MM7558.pdf>) that alerts ambulance suppliers that the Medicare and Medicaid Extension Act of 2010 extends the increase in ambulance fee schedule amounts for covered ground ambulance transports through December 31, 2011. All other information is the same.

Provider Types Affected

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

What You Need to Know

CR 6206, from which this article is taken announces an increase in payment for ground ambulance transports. Effective July 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009, the ambulance fee schedule amounts for covered ground ambulance transports

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which originate in rural areas are increased by three (3) percent, and for covered ground ambulance transports which originate non-rural areas, they are increased by two (2) percent.

You should ensure that your billing staffs are aware of these ambulance fee schedule increases.

Background

Section 146(a) of Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPAA) amends Section 1834(1)(13) of the Social Security Act to provide an increase in payment for ground transports, effective for claims with dates of service on or after July 1, 2008, and before January 1, 2010. It increases the ambulance fee schedule amounts for:

- Covered ground ambulance transports which originate in a rural area by three (3) percent; and
- Covered ground ambulance transports which originate in a non-rural area by two (2) percent.

Until the new fee schedule files have been tested and implemented, your carrier, FI, MAC will hold all of your ground ambulance claims affected by these changes and release them for processing when the files are implemented.

They will also identify ambulance claims (with dates of service on or after July 1, 2008) that were not paid at the rates that CR 6206 provides; and (to the extent possible) automatically reprocess them within 30 days of the release date of CR 6206. In addition, they will adjust claims that cannot be automatically identified and adjusted, if you bring such claims to their attention. Finally, you should be aware that your carrier, FI, or MAC will follow their normal processes for transmitting the adjusted claims to supplemental insurers, where appropriate.

Additional Information

The official instruction, CR 6206, issued to your carrier, FI, or MAC is available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R4140TN.pdf> on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website.

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

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