

Provider Partnership Program (PPP) E-mail Notification Archives

July 13, 2005

Good morning everyone. Included in this note is information about new and revised Medicare Learning Network products, Medicare Advantage Plans, and payments to home health agencies--enjoy.

New Product Available!

Medicare Preventive Services CD ROM for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers, and Other Health Care Professionals

This CD ROM contains *The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers, and Other Health Care Professionals*, five brochures; *Expanded Benefits, Glaucoma Screenings, Cancer Screenings, Bone Mass Measurements, and Adult Immunizations*, and *Quick Reference Information: Medicare Preventive Services* chart. These resources are useful for Medicare fee-for-service physicians, providers, suppliers, and other health care professionals that bill Medicare fee-for-service contractors (Fiscal Intermediaries and Carriers). To order your free CD ROM visit our Medlearn Product Ordering System at http://cms.meridianksi.com/kc/main/kc_frame.asp?kc_ident=kc0001&loc=5click on the CMS website.

Recently Revised Medlearn Matters Articles

This isn't a complete listing but just a few articles that I thought might be of particular interest to you.

SE0418 - Non-Physician Practitioner Questions and Answers **Revised: 7/6/2005**

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/matters/mmarticles/2004/SE0418.pdf>

MM3847 - New Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Drug Codes

Revised: 7/1/2005

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/matters/mmarticles/2005/MM3847.pdf>

MM3888 - Medicare Contractor Annual Update of the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM) **Revised: 7/1/2005**

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/matters/mmarticles/2005/MM3888.pdf>

MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES TO HAVE MORE HEALTH PLAN CHOICES AND GREATER SAVINGS WITH MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS THAN EVER BEFORE

Nearly all Medicare beneficiaries across the U.S. have access to Medicare coordinated care plans and other health plan options in 2005, and these plans are providing significant new out-of-pocket savings to Medicare beneficiaries, particularly those with chronic illnesses. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced that it has approved 143 new Medicare Advantage plans to provide services in 2005, far exceeding the highest number of plans that had been previously available. The availability of these plans in 49 states, along with their enhanced benefits and increased savings, are the results of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. CMS is currently reviewing the applications, formularies and bids submitted by Medicare Advantage organizations, including the new regional PPOs, and by prescription drug plans that

want to serve Medicare beneficiaries in 2006. CMS expects to finalize contracts with those organizations later this year.

View the entire press release online at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1497>

HOME HEALTH PAYMENT RATE INCREASE ANNOUNCED

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced their proposal of a 2.5 percent increase in Medicare payment rates to home health agencies for calendar year 2006. The increase would bring an extra \$330 million in payments to home health agencies next year. Medicare pays home health agencies through a prospective payment system (PPS), which pays at higher rates to care for those beneficiaries with greater needs. Payment rates are based on relevant data from patient assessments conducted by clinicians as already required for all Medicare-participating home health agencies.

Home health payment rates are updated annually by either the full home health market basket percentage, or by the home health market basket percentage as adjusted by Congress. CMS establishes the home health market basket index, which measures inflation in the prices of an appropriate mix of goods and services included in home health services. For CY 2006, the proposed estimated home health market basket percentage is 3.3. Section 701(b)(4) of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 provided that updates for CY 2005 and CY 2006 will equal the applicable home health market basket percentage increase minus 0.8 percentage point.

CMS is also proposing to adopt revised Core Based Statistical Area market area definitions as announced by the Office of Management and Budget. These market area definitions are used to set payment adjustments to reflect variation in costs across geographical areas. As part of this proposal, we estimate that rural home health agencies will experience a 0.7 percent increase in payments. Also, it is estimated that the combined effect of all changes in this proposed rule will result in a 3.5 percent increase to payments to rural home health agencies and a 2.3 percent increase in payments to urban home health agencies.

Information regarding CMS' CY 2006 update to the home health PPS rates is available at Medicare's consumer web site <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/hha/cms1301p.pdf>, <http://www.medicare.gov/and> through Medicare's help line, 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). Comments are accepted until close of business on September 6, 2005.

View the entire press release online at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1500>

Hope you enjoy your day.

Best regards ~ Valerie

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July 26, 2005

Hello everyone ~ below you will find exciting news regarding training opportunities on the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. We encourage you to share this with all of your members. Thanks!

Subject: Training Opportunity - Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Beginning January 1, 2006, Medicare's new Prescription Drug Coverage becomes available.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is hosting free workshops in several locations during August and September 2005, designed specifically for agencies, organizations, and providers who assist people with Medicare.

In these workshops, you will learn about Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage and how you can help educate people with Medicare about this new benefit. The workshops are scheduled for:

- * **Tuesday, August 2, 2005, Lake Buena Vista, Florida**
- * **Tuesday, August 9, 2005, San Diego, California**
- * **Friday, August 12, 2005, Chicago, Illinois**
- * **Wednesday, September 7, 2005, Westminster, (Denver) Colorado**

Workshop Agenda

8:00 A.M. - Continental Breakfast

8:30 A.M. - Pre-conference: Medicare Basics Intensive

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. - General Session: Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

There is no charge for this workshop. You may register at www.2005medicaretraining.com. If you are unable to register on-line, please call 1-800-886-1696 to register by phone or you may fax your registration to 1-866-483-7314.

Sincerely,

The National Medicare & You Training Program Workshop Team

Phone: 1-800-886-1696
Fax: 1-866-483-7314
www.2005medicaretraining.com

With best regards ~ Valerie

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July 27, 2005

I apologize for not including this in yesterday's message about the Drug Coverage Training Sessions ~ I really do try to minimize the e-mail flow. However, I think you'll be interested in this additional educational resource for Drug Coverage information!

CMS has released the Toolkit for Healthcare Professionals: Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. To access the toolkit and other educational resources, visit the drug coverage information webpage (Medlearn) for physicians and other healthcare professionals, www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/drugcoverage.asp, or click on the direct link below.

The Toolkit for Healthcare Professionals: Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (adobe pdf 860Kb) includes downloadable educational materials specifically for physicians and other healthcare professionals and their staff to learn the basics about Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. It also includes materials to distribute to their Medicare patients. The kit contains reproducible artwork, a letter from the CMS Administrator, a fact sheet (english and spanish), a brochure, an article, and a list of other resources.

Physicians and other healthcare professionals and their staff, partner organizations, social workers, financial counselors, and discharge planners will find this toolkit a valuable resource to get information to people with Medicare. You may add your logo and business information to these materials and copy freely, if you wish.

Best regards ~ Valerie

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July 29, 2005

Good Friday everyone! The Provider Partnership Team has been on the road meeting with potential partners for several weeks now, and I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of the associations that have recently signed on to our network. We very much appreciate your willingness to help CMS disseminate important Medicare provider information and to give us your valuable feedback as to how we can improve our education and outreach to the Medicare fee-for-service provider community.

In this e-mail note you will find information on:

- New educational materials from the Medicare Learning Network
- Hospital Outpatient Services
- Advisory Panel on Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) Groups
- Organ Procurement
- Nursing Home Payments
- Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage
- Beneficiary-Related News



NEW FROM THE MEDICARE LEARNING NETWORK

New Medlearn Matters Article for Nursing Home Administrators Regarding Medicare Rx Drug Coverage

A Medlearn Matters article on the new Medicare prescription drug coverage was released on Thursday, July 21, 2005. "Message to Nursing Home Administrators on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage--The Sixth in the Series of Medlearn Matters Articles on the New Prescription Drug Coverage" (SE0544) contains important information for nursing home staff about the impact of the new prescription drug coverage on people who receive both Medicare and Medicaid. Visit [Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Information for Providers](#) on the Medlearn website to view the article and other drug coverage resources for Medicare providers.

Limited Income? SSA Can Help - Posters Are Now Available!

These posters direct Medicare beneficiaries with limited income to a toll-free helpline to find out if they are eligible for help with prescription drug costs. Posters are suitable for display in pharmacies and clinical and other health care settings. To order, visit http://cms.meridianksi.com/kc/main/kc_frame.asp?kc_ident=kc0001&loc=5. You may also download flyer-size copies of the posters at [Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Information for Providers](#).

Just released!! CERT Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Rate Testing Program. The CERT Fact Sheet can be viewED on the Medicare Learning Network webpage at

www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/pubs.asp on the CMS Website. I have also attached a pdf copy of the fact sheet for your convenience.



print file of fact
sheet.pdf (...)

MEDICARE PROPOSES PAYMENT RATES AND POLICY CHANGES FOR HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT SERVICES

Acute care hospitals will receive a 3.2 percent inflation update in Medicare payment rates in 2006 for outpatient services under a proposed Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) rule announced recently by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) that also continues to lower the coinsurance rates that patients in Medicare have to pay for outpatient services. Also, sole community hospitals in rural areas will receive an additional 6.6 percent payment adjustment, a move that stems from a study of rural hospital costs authorized as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA).

The proposed rule was published in the July 25th *Federal Register*. Comments will be accepted until Friday, September 16, 2005, and a final rule is scheduled to be published by November 1, 2005. For more information, visit the CMS Website at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/hopps/2006p/1501p.asp> . To view the related press release, go to the CMS Website at:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1506>

ORGAN PROCUREMENT

The comments on CMS-3064-P: the Proposed Organ Procurement Conditions for Coverage and CMS-3835-P: the proposed Hospital Conditions of Participation: Requirements for Approval and Reapproval of Transplant Centers to Perform Organ Transplants have been posted to the CMS website:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/regulations/ecomments/commentspage.asp> .

NURSING HOME PAYMENTS TO INCREASE IN 2006, CMS ANNOUNCES

Medicare payments to nursing homes will increase by \$20 million in 2006, an improvement over earlier forecasts that predicted no increase for long-term care providers next year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced Thursday. The final regulation implementing the new payment rates is on display today at the offices of the *Federal Register*.

In the final rule, CMS introduced nine new payment categories to the current system, increasing the number of categories from 44 to 53. While these refinements trigger the elimination of temporary add-on payments as Congress directed in the Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1999 (BBRA), the final rule includes other changes, which will balance its impact.

The SNF PPS final rule is on the CMS website at www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/snfpps. This press release is available online at:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1513>

ADVISORY PANEL ON AMBULATORY PAYMENT CLASSIFICATION APC) GROUPS

CMS announced in a correction notice published in the Federal Register on July 14, 2005 (CMS-1288-CN; 70 FR 40709) that August 1, 2005 is the deadline for the submission of hardcopy written comments, suggested agenda topics, oral presentations, and presenter/presentation information for the meeting of the Advisory Panel on Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) Groups scheduled for August 17-19, 2005. In response to requests that additional time be allowed for submission of presentation materials, CMS is announcing the following changes in deadlines for the submission of material:

Submissions Required Not Later Than 6 pm EDT, Monday, August 1, 2005:

- An outline or detailed summary of each presentation (electronic version).
- Electronic version of completed Presenter/Presentation Checklist (Form CMS-20017). The link to this form is <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/forms/cms20017.pdf>

Submit the electronic version of summary/outline and Checklist by e-mail to:
APCPanel@cms.hhs.gov.

Submissions Required Not Later Than 6 pm EDT, Friday, August 5, 2005:

- Final oral presentations (both hardcopy and electronic format).
- Supplemental data and information
- Written comments for consideration by the APC Panel (both hardcopy and electronic format).

Submit electronic version of presentations and comments by e-mail to:
APCPanel@cms.hhs.gov

AND

Send hardcopy presentations and comments to:

Shirl Ackerman-Ross, DFO
CMS/CMM/HAPG/DOC
7500 Security Boulevard
Mail Stop C4-05-17
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

For further information, contact Shirl Ackerman-Ross, (410) 786-4474.

WEBCAST ON THE MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN FINDER

You are invited to view and participate in a CMS-sponsored webcast on Tuesday, August 2, 2005 at 1:00 PM Eastern Time. The webcast will provide a preview of the navigation and information to be provided through the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder tool when it is launched in October 2005. The Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder will provide people with Medicare the information they need to join a Prescription Drug Plan that meets their needs. The purpose of the web cast is to get feedback from the various stakeholder groups interested in the implementation of Medicare prescription drug coverage.

The webcast details are as follows:

Date: Tuesday, August 2, 2005

Title: "Your First Look at Finding a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan on the Web"

Time: 1:00 PM EDT

URL: <http://videocast.nih.gov/>

To participate in the webcast log on to the URL above, hosted by National Institutes of Health (NIH), about 5-10 minutes before 1:00 PM on August 2nd. Once at the site, select the link titled "Your First Look at Finding a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan on the Web" that will be available under "Today's Events."

Participants of this webcast are encouraged to submit questions or suggestions by phone, fax or e-mail during the webcast.

We hope you will be able to join us as we demonstrate the prototype of the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder.

BENEFICIARY-RELATED NEWS

New Web Service Helps Medicare Beneficiaries with Limited Means Get More Health Care Assistance

A new web-based service will help Medicare beneficiaries of limited income and resources gain access to the extra help available to them through the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. The service, which will also help them enroll in other health care and prescription drug assistance programs, was developed by the Administration on Aging (AoA) with the assistance of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the National Council on the Aging (NCOA).

The new service is a special version of BenefitsCheckUpRx updated for the extra help with Medicare drug coverage. It is available at <http://www.BenefitsCheckUp.org/rx>. BenefitsCheckUpRx will help older adults and the advocates who work with them take advantage of the Medicare low-income subsidy, the comprehensive extra help that covers 95 percent of drug costs on average for people with Medicare who have limited means. Applications are available now and altogether, about one in three Medicare beneficiaries are eligible for the extra help.

View the entire press release online at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1502> .

The following beneficiary publications are available to order:

11102 "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs"
LOCATED on DROP DOWN MENU Option-Beneficiary-MMA

11105 + 11105-S "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription
Drugs for people with limited income and resources" LOCATED on DROP
DOWN MENU Option-Beneficiary-MMA

11106 + 11106-S "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription
Drugs for people with Medicare and Medicaid, and Medicaid now pays for their
prescription drugs" LOCATED on DROP DOWN MENU Option-Beneficiary-
MMA

11102-S "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs"
(Spanish) LOCATED on DROP DOWN MENU Option-Beneficiary-MMA

11116 "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs for
people who get Supplemental Security Income benefits or help from their state
Medicaid program paying their Medicare premiums" LOCATED on DROP DOWN
MENU Option-Beneficiary-MMA

11130 "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs if
You've Applied for Extra Help" LOCATED on DROP DOWN MENU Option-
Beneficiary-MMA

11108 + 11108-S "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription
Drugs For people who get help from your state pharmacy program to pay for thier
prescription drugs" LOCATED on DROP DOWN MENU Option-Beneficiary-
MMA

11121 "Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription drugs for
people who are Nusing Home residents or live in certain types of Long-Term Care
Facilities" LOCATED on DROP DOWN MENU Option-Beneficiary-MMA

10969-S "Medicare and Home Health Care" (Spanish) LOCATED on DROP
DOWN MENU Option-Beneficiary-Misc

02154 "Medicare Hospice Benefits" LOCATED on DROP DOWN MENU
Option-Beneficiary-Misc

Publication Number 11115 "Spreading the Word About Medicare's New Preventive
Services (Tool kit)"

All publications are located at <http://pubordering.cms.hhs.gov/maillinglist>.

I hope you all enjoy a wonderful weekend!

Best regards ~ Valerie

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