

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



Information and Education Resources for Medicare Fee-For-Service Health Care Providers

FACT SHEET

Provider Types Affected

All Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) physicians, providers, and other health care professionals.

Provider Action Needed

This fact sheet is informational only and is intended to notify Medicare FFS providers about the information and education resources that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has developed to help meet their Medicare business needs.

Background

One of the goals of CMS is to give Medicare's 1.3 million FFS providers the information they need to understand the Program, be aware of changes, and bill correctly. By making information and education resources easily accessible, understandable, and available as timely as possible, FFS providers will be better able to submit bills correctly the first time, receive reimbursements more quickly, and spend less time dealing with paperwork. All of this can result in more time to spend on patient care. We are committed to accomplishing this goal by offering Medicare FFS providers the use of various information delivery systems and a variety of educational products and services to reach the broadest and most appropriate audiences possible.

Three-Pronged Provider Information and Outreach Approach

CMS relies on the cooperative efforts of its Medicare FFS contractors, Regional Offices, and Central Office provider communications staff to deliver a seamless information and outreach approach to Medicare FFS providers.

1) Medicare FFS Contractors

Medicare Contractors, also called A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs), Fiscal Intermediaries (FI), and carriers serve as the primary point of contact for most Medicare FFS providers. These contractors provide toll-free telephone lines for inquiries, conduct outreach and education, and often interact with local professional associations. Their outreach and education activities include in-person seminars, bulletins and newsletters, and speaker appearances. Medicare Contractors also offer quick dissemination of timely information via websites and provider-specific electronic listservs (mailing lists). If you have questions about the Medicare Program, you should first get in touch with your Medicare Contractor. To find contact information, please visit <http://www.cms.gov/MLNGenInfo> on the CMS website. Once there, scroll down to the "Downloads" section to find the Provider Call Center Toll-Free Numbers Directory.

2) CMS Regional Offices

Staff at CMS' Regional Offices are active with the Medicare FFS provider communities including rural health care providers, at state and local levels. Regional Offices maintain contacts and relationships with state and local provider associations. Regional Offices conduct outreach activities such as hosting provider-oriented meetings and furnishing speakers at professional conferences. CMS' Regional Offices are located in ten major cities throughout the country. Contact Information can be found at <http://www.cms.gov/RegionalOffices> on the CMS website.

3) CMS Central Office in Baltimore, Maryland

The Provider Communications Staff at CMS Central Office works closely with both Medicare FFS contractors and Regional Office staff to ensure that consistent and coordinated Medicare information and resources are available to all Medicare FFS providers. Education and outreach activities from the CMS Central Office focus on accuracy, consistency and timeliness. Given the hectic schedules of today's health care professionals, most of our current initiatives are aimed at fostering a "self-service" environment so that users can access information and education 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As a result, we have significantly increased the use of the Internet as a key tool for continuous improvement to customer service. Our efforts have resulted in a variety of products and services, such as:

- **Medicare Learning Network** ~ The Medicare Learning Network (MLN) is the brand name for official CMS Medicare FFS provider educational products and is designed to promote national consistency of information developed for CMS initiatives. For more details visit <http://www.cms.gov/MLNGenInfo> on the CMS website. MLN products range from web-based training courses, comprehensive training guides, brochures, and fact sheets to CD-ROMs and videos. MLN products are free of charge and can be ordered or downloaded from the MLN Web page located at <http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts> on the CMS website.
- **MLN Matters Articles** ~ One of the best sources for the latest Medicare FFS information is "MLN Matters" national articles, which are available at <http://www.cms.gov/MLNMattersArticles>. These articles are designed to give Medicare FFS providers and their staff easy-to-understand information related to new and recently changed Medicare rules and policies. On the MLN Matters web page, you will find various search tools for easy access to each article and its corresponding program instructions, if applicable. You can join the MLN Matters mailing list to receive electronic notification when new articles are released by visiting <https://list.nih.gov>.
- **CMS Provider Web Pages** ~ CMS has designed provider-specific web pages to assist institutional providers, individual physicians, and other health care professionals in quickly obtaining information relevant to them. These web pages are customized, one-stop resources and include spotlights on items such as new regulations and hot Medicare topics, as well as links to general information on enrollment, billing, conditions of participation, publications, education, data, and statistics. We also have Physician web pages that provide links of interest to various physician specialties. From the CMS Home Page at <http://www.cms.gov>, you can access these pages by clicking on "Outreach and Education" under the heading Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, "All Fee-for-Service Providers" under the "Browse by Provider Type" section in the middle of the page. You can also access the Provider Center page by clicking on <http://www.cms.gov/center/provider.asp>.
- **Listserv Messages** ~ CMS offers a way for Medicare FFS providers to receive consistent and accurate provider-oriented information regarding recent news, policy changes, and updates via electronic mailing lists, also referred to as listservs, or CMS Email Updates. These electronic mailing lists enable providers to receive emails about the latest CMS initiatives. Information on how to subscribe to Medicare FFS Provider listservs, or CMS Email Updates, is available at http://www.cms.gov/prospmedicarefeesvcpmtgen/downloads/Provider_Listservs.pdf on the CMS website.
- **Open Door Forums** ~ CMS is very interested in hearing from and interacting with Medicare providers who deliver quality health care to our nation's beneficiaries. We continue to emphasize our responsiveness through an ongoing series of Open Door Forums that provide an environment for interactive dialogue. Open Door Forums are chaired by senior-level Agency officials and co-chaired by CMS Regional Office officials. For more information, please visit <http://www.cms.gov/OpenDoorForums> on the CMS website.
- **Exhibit Program** ~ CMS hosts exhibit booths at physician and other health care professional association conferences. The CMS Exhibit Program provides an excellent opportunity for CMS Central and Regional Office staff to have direct contact with the Medicare provider community to listen to issues, concerns, and challenges and to share timely and relevant information. To request a MLN Provider Exhibit at your national or regional provider association conference/meeting, send an email to MLNExhibits@cms.gov.

Medicare FFS Provider Feedback

Although we try our best to be responsive to the education and information needs of the Medicare FFS providers, we cannot do it alone. Your feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of our educational resources is very important to us as it helps ensure that we are "getting it right." Please submit your comments or suggestions to the Medicare Learning Network's mailbox at MLN@cms.gov. We look forward to hearing from you!

