

IMS Advocate

published by the Iowa Medical Society

November 13, 2009

IBM wraps up ad hoc meetings

The Iowa Board of Medicine's (IBM) ad hoc committee has concluded its series of meetings examining high-risk interventional techniques in managing pain. The goal is to determine which procedures are considered the practice of medicine and those that could be performed by non-physicians. The IBM will address the committee's results at its December meeting.

IPA starts TakeAway program

The Iowa Pharmacy Association (IPA) has launched a safe and easy medication disposal program for Iowans. The goal is to: 1) reduce drug diversion; and 2) lessen the negative environmental effects of patients disposing of pharmaceuticals at home.

IMS is partnering with IPA to promote the program. To learn more and to find participating pharmacies, visit www.iarx.org/takeaway.

DUR seeks physician feedback

The Iowa Medicaid Drug Utilization Review Commission (DUR) recently recommended Medicaid clinical prior authorization criteria changes. The DUR seeks physician feedback on changes for: 1) bupropion SR inclusion for smoking cessation therapy; 2) proton pump inhibitors; 3) ankylosing spondylitis; and 4) short acting narcotics.

Visit www.iowamedical.org to read the letter from the DUR. Send feedback by November 27 to enemmers@iowamedical.org.

Support H.R. 3961 "Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act"

Health reform discussions continue to dominate Congress. Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives narrowly passed H.R. 3962, which is its federal health reform package. The Senate has yet to pass a bill. If one is passed, then the two bills will need to be reconciled in a conference committee. All legislation thus far has contained measures supported and opposed by physicians. Proposals for legislation change regularly, so stay tuned with major developments at www.iowamedical.org.

Next week, a floor vote is planned on a separate bill, H.R. 3961, which would permanently replace the flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula that calls for annual cuts in Medicare physician payments. If Congress does not act soon, Medicare payments will be cut by 21.2 percent in January. Previous short-term fixes have prevented annual cuts but have not solved the larger problem of a fundamentally broken system.

Contact your representative to ask for his vote on H.R. 3961. The process is quick and easy – you may reach them through the AMA Grassroots Hotline at (800) 833-6354. You can also use the contact tool at www.ama-assn.org. Ask your representative to support the bill because it is fiscally responsible for Congress to permanently repeal the SGR formula and thereby fulfill obligations to Medicare patients and military families covered by TRICARE.

AMA survey proves practice expense GPCI is flawed

IMS has worked with 26 other medical societies for many years as part of the Geographic Equity in Medicare (GEM) coalition in advocating fairness in Medicare payments. The AMA has just released a geographic analysis of the Physician Practice Information survey, which validates IMS and GEM's assertions that there are no geographic practice expense differences. It is therefore illogical to penalize physicians in Iowa and other rural locations with lower reimbursement simply because of their location. IMS will continue to call on Congress to address this payment inequity. To learn more on this issue, visit the GEM page under the "Medicare" tab at www.iowamedical.org.

FTC delays Red Flags compliance again

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) agreed again to delay enforcement of its Red Flags rule, this time at the urging of U.S. House of Representatives members working on legislative relief for small entities. The House bill would exempt small health care providers (20 or fewer employees), accounting firms, and legal practices from enforcement and provide an exemption process for others. H.R. 3763 has passed the House and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. The FTC's new compliance deadline is **June 1, 2010**.

The AMA continues advocacy on this issue but also has published resources to guide physician practices in establishing identity theft protocols. To learn more, visit www.ama-assn.org/ama/no-index/physician-resources/red-flags-rule.shtml.



Iowa Medical Society legislative staff

Michael Abrams

Executive Vice President
mabrams@iowamedical.org

Jeanine Freeman, JD

Senior Vice President of Legal Affairs
jfreeman@iowamedical.org

Karla Fultz McHenry

Vice President of Public Policy & Advocacy
kmchenry@iowamedical.org

Eric Nemmers, JD, MHA

Legislative Counsel
enemmers@iowamedical.org

Heidi Goodman, BSN, JD

Policy Counsel
hgoodman@iowamedical.org

Sandy Nelson

Manager of Health Care Economics
snelson@iowamedical.org

Cheryl Peers

Legislative Coordinator
cpeers@iowamedical.org

IMS Headquarters
1001 Grand Avenue
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265
(800) 747-3070 or (515) 223-1401
Fax (515) 223-0590
www.iowamedical.org

Wellmark finalizes PAC Web site

As part of the federal class action *Love* settlement between representative physicians and the nation's Blues plans, Wellmark has established a Physician Advisory Committee (PAC). Wellmark has finalized its PAC Web site that describes the PAC and provides contact information. PAC members receive physician concerns and bring them to Wellmark's attention. Wellmark is required to consider PAC recommendations and to post its responses on the PAC Web site. The PAC first met in June and will meet again in December. To learn more, visit www.wellmark.com/Provider/CommunicationAndResources/PACs.aspx.

UHC expands advanced radiology notification requirements

One of the advantages of being a UnitedHealthcare (UHC) 2-star Premium designated physician was exemption from UHC's radiology notification requirements for outpatient imaging procedures, namely CT scans, MRIs, PET scans, and nuclear medicine studies, including nuclear cardiology. Effective for services provided on or after February 15, 2010, all ordering UHC network physicians are required to comply with UHC's prior notification procedures for advanced imaging procedures. UHC intends to send Iowa physicians information about this change the week of November 16.

AMA calls for participation in "Heal That Claim" month

Data shows that physician practices spend up to \$210 billion each year on administrative waste, and 14 percent of physicians revenue is spent on claims administration. To help medical practices lower these costs, the AMA is again conducting its "Heal That Claim" campaign. To learn how you can effectively participate, search "Heal That Claim" at the AMA Web site, www.ama-assn.org. Also, the AMA has developed a helpful claims process checklist you can download at www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/368/claims-checklist.pdf. Practices have reported substantial savings from participation in this campaign.

IHS offers free electronic prescribing system

Iowa Health System (IHS) and Allscripts, the nation's largest provider of electronic prescribing software, announced a new initiative called ePrescribe Iowa. This partnership will offer free Web-based e-prescribing capability to all Iowa physicians. The Web-based software requires no download or new hardware. Allscripts believes that training would take less than 30 minutes. The program can generate secure electronic prescriptions and deliver them to any pharmacy. For more information on the free ePrescribe Iowa program, contact Allscripts at (877) 759-0033.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 9901
Des Moines, Iowa

Iowa Medical Society
1001 Grand Avenue
West Des Moines, IA 50265