

IMS Advocate

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IMS Workers' Comp seminar – change in location

Due to high interest, IMS has moved the location of its Workers' Compensation seminar from 1:00-4:30 p.m. on December 11 to the West Des Moines Marriott.

Coding & Medicare '08 update

IMS will sponsor a CPT coding and Medicare policy changes seminar on January 10, 2008, from 9-12 noon via the ICN. To register, go to www.iowamedical.org/edu.htm.

Iowa Part B transition to WPS implementation teleconference

Effective February 1, 2008, Iowa Part B will be processed by WPS instead of Noridian. WPS will host an implementation teleconference on Thursday, January 17, 2008, from 9-10:30 a.m. CST. The toll-free phone number is (877) 290-9695; the conference ID/password is 22437789. All Part B providers are encouraged to participate.

Request for HIT abstracts

The 4th Annual Iowa HIT Summit will be held August 28, 2008, at the Embassy Suites in Des Moines. The Iowa HIT Initiative is requesting abstract proposals, which should be submitted by January 15, 2008. For more information, go to www.iowamedical.org/HIT/RequestforAbstracts08.pdf.

Legislative session set to begin

The first day of the 2008 Iowa Legislative Session will be Monday, January 14.

Congress must act to avert January 1 Medicare pay cut

Senators Grassley and Harkin need to hear from physicians now as the Medicare legislation is being crafted. It is crucial that the Senate take action to stop the pending Medicare physician payment cut, and the SGR package must be paid for this year, not financed by pushing it into the next year. Physicians cannot sustain a 15% cumulative cut in 2009. As the ranking Republican member of the Senate Finance Committee, Sen. Grassley needs to hear from you. Ask Sen. Harkin to speak with Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT), the chair and ranking member of the Finance Committee. Urge them to dedicate new funding to the Medicare update and include positive physician payment updates for the next two years in the bill being drafted. Members of the Senate Finance Committee have yet to reach a consensus regarding how to proceed in averting the impending 10% cut. Reducing over-payments to Medicare Advantage plans is a possible offset to avert physician payment cuts. IMS asks that you call the senators' offices directly at (202) 224-3744 (Sen. Grassley) and (202) 224-3254 (Sen. Harkin) by December 14. If you cannot make a phone call but would send an e-mail, go to www.iowamedical.org; select the Legislative Advocacy tab along the left side and then click on IMS AdvocacyALERT.

Iowa Part B transition from Noridian to WPS will occur Feb. 1

Wisconsin Physicians Service Insurance Corporation (WPS) will assume Iowa's Medicare Part B business effective February 1, 2008. See the related sidebar article for call-in information on a WPS J5 MAC implementation teleconference on January 17. To learn more about the transition, go to www.wpsmedicare.com and select J5 MAC under Provider. Review the J5 MAC Q&As and sign up for the e-News Listserv to stay informed about the transition. Go to www.wpsic.com/edi/med_index_p.shtml for EDI information. EFT will require completion of a new CMS-588 form.

CMS says: Do not report SSN in FOIA-disclosable NPPES fields

CMS has alerted providers that in completing their NPPES records for NPI purposes, they should **not** include their Social Security number (SSN) or the SSN of any other provider in those fields that are disclosable to the public under the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). At this time, CMS is suppressing all 9-digit numbers (except zip codes and telephone and fax numbers) found in any FOIA-disclosable field to avoid public release of a SSN. CMS explains that common FOIA-disclosable fields where SSNs are showing up include "Other Provider Identification Numbers," "License Numbers," and "Employer Identification Numbers." CMS says it is "imperative that providers immediately look at their NPPES records (<https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>) to ensure that they did not inadvertently report their, or someone else's, SSN in a FOIA-disclosable field" and, if they did, to delete that SSN immediately and, as appropriate, provide the correct information." Go to www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand and select CMS Communications along the left to read the advisory.



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

Manager of Legislative Policy
enemmers@iowamedical.org

Heidi Goodman, RN, JD

Manager of Public & Regulatory Affairs
hgoodman@iowamedical.org

Sandy Nelson

Manager of Health Care Economics
snelson@iowamedical.org

Cheryl Peers

Legislative Administrative Assistant
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

PERM to measure improper Medicaid and SCHIP payments

Under the Payment Error Rate Measurement (PERM) program, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will use three national contractors to measure improper payments in Medicaid and SCHIP made by states for services rendered to recipients. Providers' interactions in this process will be primarily with the documentation/database contractor (DDC), Livanta, who will collect medical policies from the state and medical records from providers either in hard copy or electronic format. View Iowa DHS Informational Release 656 (www.ime.state.ia.us/docs/656PERMIL11192007.doc) for more information.

Humana Gold Choice – MediConnect medical records requests

Iowa medical practices have informed IMS that Humana is once again seeking medical records via a letter from MediConnect which is silent regarding payment of fees for receipt of such medical records. Humana's Gold Choice program is a Medicare Advantage (MA) private fee-for-service (PFFS) plan which can receive risk adjusted "bump-up" payments for Medicare beneficiaries with certain medical conditions. Humana must provide medical record documentation of the diagnosis in order to receive the risk adjusted payment from CMS. Unfortunately, receipt of the bump-up payment by a MA PFFS plan does not increase the plan's payment to the physician. Physicians are "deemed" to be participating in a MA PFFS plan on a patient-to-patient basis so long as the physician knowingly treats the MA PFFS patient and the PFFS plan's terms and conditions are accessible to the physician; Humana's terms and conditions are available on its Web site. Those terms also are silent on payment of costs for medical records, but Humana has paid fees upon request by the medical practice. There is no specific regulatory guidance on this matter. IMS is coordinating with the AMA, which is working with CMS and MA PFFS plans on this and several other MA issues.

New I-9 employee verification forms

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) advised through notice published in the November 26, 2007, *Federal Register* that employers must begin to use the revised version of the I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Rev. 06/05/07N) no later than December 26, 2007. Failure to do so may result in penalties. Appendix A to the revised form contains an amended listing of documents that can be used as evidence of an individual's identity and employment eligibility. Employers do not need to complete the revised I-9 form for current employees with an I-9 on file; however, the revised I-9 form must be used for re-verifications performed on or after December 26, 2007. For more information, go to www.uscis.gov.