



Blue Cross-is Switching to Paperless EOBs.

Physician practices that have previously registered for Blue Cross's online provider portal, ProviderAccess, will no longer receive printed EOBs with their checks. Effective October 6, you will be required to go to the Blue Cross website to obtain claims information and to download or print out EOBs, if necessary. EOBs will be only available online for 18 months. Practices that have not registered for ProviderAccess will continue to receive paper EOBs. Thanks, once again, to CMA advocacy, Blue Cross has agreed to allow physicians to opt-out of the paperless EOB program. If you would like to continue receiving paper EOBs, call Anthem Network Relations at 800/933-6633.

Blue Cross Fee Schedule Changes Take Effect January 1.

Anthem Blue Cross notified physicians that they would be modifying payment levels for many CPT codes, some being increased and others decreased, to its Prudent Buyer fee schedule that will take effect January 1, 2010.

The new rates are available at the Blue Cross website <http://bluecrossca.com>. If you do not have Internet access, call Blue Cross Provider Relations at 800/933-6633. If you do not agree with proposed changes, you can terminate the contract anytime before November 11.

Physicians Urged to Pre-Register for H1N1 Vaccine

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is urging physicians to pre register for the Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine. Even if you are not ready to place an order, you must register now to inform CDPH of your interest in being a vaccinator.

Unlike the seasonal flu vaccine, the H1N1 vaccine will not be distributed through regular suppliers. Due to the uncertainty of the supply and capacity, CDPH is serving as a central distribution point so that the vaccine is available to those who need it most.

Physicians are being asked to register as vaccinators so that CDPH can get a realistic assessment of physician capacity and interest in vaccinating. When registering, be prepared to submit your NPI number, the projected number of doses of the vaccine your practice expects to use, and the number of patients your practice has that fit into the high-risk groups. By registering, you are not making a commitment to administer the same quantity of vaccine.

To register, or for more information, visit <http://www.CalPanFlu.org>. Physicians who are ready to order vaccine can also do so at that web page. You should be aware, however, that vaccine will not be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

The H1N1 vaccine does not protect against the seasonal flu. Because of the dual flu threat and the impact the increased patient volume is expected to have on physician practices, physicians are urged to start administering the seasonal flu vaccine, as soon as possible, before the arrival of the H1N1 vaccine in October.

Source: CMA Alert Issue 2166

Blue Cross Will Continue to Pay Healthy Families Claims

Blue Cross announced earlier this year that it would require physicians to sign a separate contract and accept reduced rates if they want to continue treating Blue Cross-insured Healthy Families and AIM patients. The effective date on the new contracts is September 1, and the insurer had said claims with dates of service on or after that date would not be paid without a newly signed Healthy Families contract. Thanks to CMA advocacy, Blue Cross has decided to allow physicians with Prudent Buyer contracts to continue to treat Blue Cross Healthy Families patients through at least the end of October. In lieu of a newly signed Healthy Families contract, physicians will, for most services, be paid 125 percent of Medi-Cal.

Blue Cross has also clarified how physicians will be paid for vaccines under the new contract. Physicians will be reimbursed at either the current market-based rates (which represent Blue Cross's cost to acquire the vaccine through its group purchasing arrangement), or the official Healthy Families fee schedule rate, whichever is greater. To ensure physicians are not out-of-pocket for the cost of vaccines, Blue Cross-contracted physicians can purchase vaccine at the reduced group rate from the insurer's preferred vaccine vendors. It remains unclear how/if physicians will be reimbursed an additional amount for vaccine administration.