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www.sccma.org

Coding/Reimbursement News

Santa Clara County Medical Association ● 408/998-8850

Unpaid Claims Piling up?



*Contact SCCMA's
Reimbursement
Specialist,
Sandie Becker, for
Assistance With:*

- Carrier failure to process "clean claims" in accordance with State law.
- Habitual downcoding
- Treatment authorization and subsequent denial
- Payment inconsistent with payer contract
- Coding guidance

Palmetto GBA News

Palmetto Inundated With Calls

We are now into our third week of the transition from NHIC to our new Medicare carrier, Palmetto GBA. Palmetto is overwhelmed with calls and providers are complaining that they are having a hard time getting through to them. According to Palmetto, the answers to the majority of callers' questions are readily available on its website. Physicians and their staff are urged to check the FAQ section on the Palmetto website before calling, so that the phone lines are freed up for those with urgent payment issues. SCCMA and CMA have been in close contact with Palmetto throughout the transition process and continue to have regular conference calls to discuss physician concerns. Because physicians have complained of busy signals and long wait times when calling Palmetto, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has authorized Palmetto to hire 35 additional call center staff and add more telephone lines. This process will take a few weeks, but once the lines are put in and new staff is trained, you should experience significantly less hold time and fewer busy signals. Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions regarding the transition. Additional FAQ can be found at www.palmettogba.com/j1b.

Q: How can I find out status of claims I submitted before the transition?

A: To check the status of a claim, call Palmetto's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 866/ 931-3903.

Q: I early boarded (or sent my submitter application prior to August 15), but did not receive my submitter number. When will I get it?

A: All passwords were emailed to early boarders before the transition. Check your junk or spam mail for a message from medicare.edi@palmettogba.com. If you still cannot find your password, e-mail medicare.edi@palmettogba.com with the subject line "Resend Password" and someone will respond as soon as possible.

Q: I just submitted a new EDI submitter application. How do I find out if Palmetto received it and when will I receive my submitter number?

A: When your application is processed, you will receive an e-mail containing your submitter number. Given the current backlog of applications, you can expect to receive your password within 20 days of submission. If after 20 days you have not received your password, check your junk or spam filter for a message from medicare.edi@palmettogba.com. If you still cannot find your password, e-mail medicare.edi@palmettogba.com with the subject line "Resend Password" and someone will respond as soon as possible with that information.

Q: When can I expect to get payments from Palmetto?

A: All claims that were still pending at the time of the transition were transferred to Palmetto and will be processed as usual (14-day hold for electronic claims, 29 days for paper).

Q: I have had trouble getting through to Palmetto by phone. What is the best time to call?

A: Because of the high call volume due to the transition, Palmetto is asking physicians to first read the FAQ on its website before calling. If you have an urgent payment issue, the best time to call Palmetto is between 7am and 9am (operating hours are 7am – 5pm PST). For EDI/EFT related questions, call 866/ 749-4301. For all other issues, call the main customer service line at (866) 931-3901. You may also contact Michelle Kelly at the California Medical Association, 888/ 401-5911 or mkelly@cmanet.org.

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