

July 18, 2017

Practice Management

Important Notice Regarding Handwriting on Claims Submitted to Medicare

On Monday, 7/10/2017, National Government Services (NGS) began returning any paper claim submitted with handwriting on the face of the claim that is not a signature field, (i.e., Items 12, 13, or 31). A notice will be attached to the front of the returned claim and physicians will need to submit a new claim.

NGS will be rolling this out on a State/Locality basis and by November, all handwritten claims will be returned to the provider. The schedule is as follows:

- August 7, 2017 - New York Upstate Localities ([County/Locality Information Here](#))
- November 13, 2017 - New York Downstate Localities ([County/Locality Information Here](#))

The [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Medicare Claims Processing Manual](#) contains the printing specifications for the CMS-1500 claim form. These printing specifications do not provide instructions to submit handwritten claims. Please use this CMS IOM reference to ensure paper claims are completed correctly.

[Please go to the NGS Medicare website if you have any questions.](#)

New Medical Marijuana Course from the New York State Department of Health

The New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) has approved a second course for practitioners on the medical use of marijuana. The four-hour course will be offered by The Medical Cannabis Institute (TMCI Global). The first course was approved in October 2015 and is provided by The Answer Page.



Both courses are available online so that practitioners can take them at their convenience, and both provide continuing medical education (CME) credits. Practitioners are only required to complete one of these courses in order to register with the Department to certify patients for the medical marijuana program.

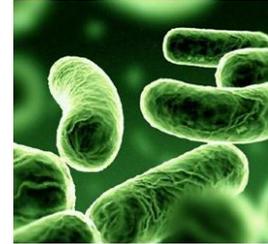
Practitioners who wish to register with the Department and certify their patients for the Medical Marijuana Program must complete one of the available approved courses. The Department also streamlined the process for practitioners to register with the program. All practitioners who newly register with the Department will be listed publicly online, unless they opt-out during the registration process, in order to help patients find participating practitioners.

A list of practitioners registered with New York's Medical Marijuana Program who have consented to be publicly listed is available on the [Department's website](#).

For more information on New York's Medical Marijuana Program, visit: https://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/medical_marijuana/.

Health Advisory on Legionellosis

While legionellosis is diagnosed year-round, the incidence of illness usually increases during the summer and early fall. Investigations into potential time-space clusters of cases above baseline incidence are currently ongoing in Niagara and Onondaga Counties. Additionally, a cluster of legionellosis cases in New York City's Lenox Hill area is being investigated by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.



- Providers should consider Legionnaires' Disease when evaluating patients presenting with signs of pneumonia and maintain a high index of suspicion for Legionella when evaluating patients with respiratory illness who live in, work in, or recently visited Niagara County, Onondaga County or Lenox Hill.
 - **in patients with suspected pneumonia, test for Legionella infection.** Legionnaires' Disease cannot be distinguished from other causes of pneumonia on clinical or radiologic grounds. Testing should be ordered on both culture of sputum or other respiratory secretions and urine antigen.
 - When ordering culture, specify the intent to identify Legionella, as laboratory procedures for identifying this organism are different from standard respiratory specimen cultures.
- Report cases promptly to the local health department where the patient resides. Public health staff may request that Legionella isolates be sent to the Department's Wadsworth Center for serogrouping and molecular typing.
 - LHD contact information is available at: https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/.
 - If you are unable to reach the LHD where the patient resides, please contact the NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at 518-473-4439 during business hours or 866-881-2809 evenings, weekends, and holidays.

[Read the health advisory in its entirety here.](#)

CMS' Open Payments Program Posts 2016 Financial Data

Applicable manufacturers and Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs) collectively reported \$8.18 billion in payments and ownership and investment interests to physicians and teaching hospitals in 2016.



On Thursday, July 13, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published the Program Year 2016 Open Payments data, along with newly submitted and updated payment records for Program Years 2013, 2014, and 2015. [They can be read here.](#)

The Open Payments program requires that transfers of value by drug, device, biological, and medical supply manufacturers to physicians and teaching hospitals be published on a public website.

In Program Year 2016, applicable manufacturers and GPOs reported \$8.18 billion in payments and ownership and investment interests to physicians and teaching hospitals. This amount is

comprised of 11.96 million total records attributable to 630,824 physicians and 1,146 teaching hospitals.

Payments in the three major reporting categories are:

- \$2.80 billion in general (i.e., non-research related) payments
- \$4.36 billion in research payments
- \$1.02 billion of ownership or investment interests held by physicians or their immediate family members

Over the course of the Open Payments program, CMS has published 40.77 million records, accounting for \$24.94 billion in payments and ownership and investment interests.

In addition to publishing the Open Payments Data, CMS has incorporated new features and enhancements to the [Open Payments Search Tool](#).

Member Benefits

Auto Insurance Reduction Course

Do you have points on your driving record or would you like a 10% reduction on your personal automobile insurance?



If so, you will want to read about the online Auto Insurance Reduction Course that is currently available as an exclusive NYACP benefit to our members and others!

NYACP continues to offer a 6-hour Insurance and Point Reduction Course that is approved by the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles and available to NYACP members, their families, office staff and friends. This convenient online member benefit allows registered "students" the ability to start and finish the course within 30 days for only \$42.00. The benefit includes a 10% reduction on your automobile insurance (liability, no-fault and collision) and up to 4 points off of your driving record (if applicable).

More information can be found [by clicking here](#).

Use ACP's Quality Payment Advisor for Medicare's New Payment Program!

The Quality Payment Advisor (QPA), ACP's free online tool helps your practice get up to speed quickly in Medicare's new payment program in order to participate in 2017 and avoid a payment penalty in 2019.



In just a few minutes:

- Determine your MACRA path—MIPS or APM (most practices will be in MIPS)
- Understand "Pick Your Pace"
- Decide how and what to report in 2017
- Learn what you and your practice need to do now

[To access the QPA, click here.](#)

MLMIC Remains Strong as PRI Goes Through Turnover



On July 6, 2017, the Albany Times Union and Politico reported that the CEO of Physicians' Reciprocal Insurers (PRI) has been removed from his position. PRI is the second largest medical malpractice insurance carrier in New York State. Charges involve "self-dealing, cronyism and mismanagement". In addition, it has been said that he "breached fiduciary duties to the malpractice insurer, ignored 'sound actuarial principles' when setting loss reserves and covered up problems by firing auditors and whistleblowers". [<More Details>](#)

While this matter is of significant concern, especially since medical liability legislation (**S6800/A8516**) will be acted upon by Governor Cuomo by the end of the year at the latest, NYACP is pleased that MLMIC "continues to demonstrate a sound financial condition" and "is able to fulfill their obligation to policyholders".

MLMIC remains one of the Chapter's most valuable membership benefits, and they will continue to monitor changes in today's marketplace. MLMIC remains available to respond to any questions and can be reached by calling 1-800-ASK-MLMIC.

Education

Commissioner's Medical Grand Rounds Archived Video Seminars

Below is a list of CME-eligible video Grand Rounds seminars co-sponsored by NYACP and archived by the New York State Department of Health:

2016-2017 SEASON

- Dietary Supplements: Buyer Beware, Provider Be Wary (1.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™)
- Baby Boomer Health: Undiagnosed conditions of persons born between 1945 and 1965 (1.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™)
- Technology Changes Our Connection: Physician and Patient Communication (2.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™)
- From A to Zika: An Update on Zika Virus for Primary Care Providers (2.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™)

The School of Public Health, University at Albany is accredited by the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

[To access the courses click here.](#)
