

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

Reader Question: Clear Up Patient Medicare Confusion

Question: We have a patient asking why she has to pay anything when we accept assignment with Medicare. How do I explain it to her?

California Subscriber

Answer: If your providers accept assignment that means they agree to accept the Medicare payment amount for a particular item or service as its payment in full. But the patient must still pay the copayment, plus any applicable deductible.

If a patient asks what happens if she goes to a practice that doesn't accept assignment, let her know that she may have to pay more than the Medicare amount at that office, although for most services a doctor's office can only charge up to 15 percent more than the amount Medicare usually pays. It also means that the patient may have to pay for the treatment's full cost up-front. Then, your practice will bill Medicare and send the Medicare payment to the patient, minus any copayments or deductibles.