

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Cardiology: MACs Differ on Response to CMS's Cardiology Payment Adjustments

Don't look for a raise just yet, in most cases.

CMS may talk, but MACs don't always listen -- at least not quickly.

As we told you in last week's Insider, CMS recently corrected several "technical errors" published in the 2010 Fee Schedule, and thanks to these corrections, Medicare will increase payment for several cardiology-related testing codes, including codes 75571-75574 (Heart CT) and 78451-78454 (Heart muscle SPECT imaging).

Although many practices are eager to see the payment boosts in their next Medicare payments, that may be an overly ambitious goal at this point.

"I inquired with a few MAC carriers such as Trailblazer, Noridian, and Palmetto, and was told different things by different Medicare payers," says **Terry Fletcher, BS, CPC, CCS-P, CCS, CMSCS, CCC, CEMS, CMS, CEO** of Terry Fletcher Consulting Inc.

"One did not even know there was a change," she says. "Next, Noridian said that they will be making the adjustments when they get the directive from CMS. And Palmetto said they would need the provider to contact them and then batch retroactive to January the myocardial perfusion imaging claims and send a letter to request the increase," she says.

Bottom line: Until CMS provides a clear answer to the MACs regarding when they must implement the changes, you may not see your pay increases, but keep an eye on your carrier's Web site for information on when it intends to reprocess claims using the new rates.