

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Carrier Warpath Just Part Of Skin Lesion Fight

You may think it's no skin off your nose if carriers slice away Mohs coverage, but you'd be wrong.

Skin cancer is a hot-button issue for Medicare right now. A study in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology (March 2003, pp. 425-9) found that non-melanoma skin cancer is the fifth most costly cancer that Medicare treats. NMSC has a low mortality rate and a much lower per-patient cost than other major cancers, but it's so common that it ends up costing almost as much as lung or colon cancer.

The carriers will be on the warpath against skin cancer expenditures, says **Carrie Gaul**. And meanwhile, Medicare wants to pay for benign lesions at the same rate as malignant ones, even though the malpractice costs are much higher for malignant ones, she says. (see PBI, Vol. 4, No. 19, p. 130.)