

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Government Shutdown: Medicare Keeps Rolling During Government Shutdown

Your MACs will continue processing payments, enrollment, CMS says.

Whether you were worried that the government shutdowns would mean halted Medicare payments or you were thrilled at the thought that the OIG would be ceasing operations, you'd be incorrect in both cases. Although the government shutdown will affect scores of federal operations nationwide, Medicare payments won't be impacted.

Although many government agencies are shuttered while Congress continues its back-and-forth over the Federal budget and the Affordable Care Act, Medicare claims will continue processing normally, CMS said in an Oct. 1 statement. "During the time that the partial government shutdown is in effect, Medicare Administrative Contractors will continue to perform all functions related to Medicare fee-for-service claims processing and payment," the agency announced.

Therefore, you shouldn't need to adjust or alter your claims submissions in any way during the governmental furlough.

Likewise, the OIG reminded practices on Oct. 2 that it will also continue working, noting, "During the Federal government shutdown, OIG will continue to send notices of updates to our website with information about our Medicare and Medicaid oversight and enforcement activities, which will continue under our mandatory funding."

However, other HHS employees may not be reporting to work during the shutdown. HHS furloughed over half of its work force (52 percent), according to ABC News. For instance, in a summary of its shutdown plan, HHS notes that "CMS would be unable to continue discretionary funding for health care fraud and abuse strike force teams resulting in the cessation of their operations."

As of press time, the shutdown was on its fourth day. Keep an eye on the Insider to monitor whether the furlough will affect any of your other systems going forward.