

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Physician Notes: CMS Launches 'Bundled Payments for Care Improvement' Initiative

Plus: Software vendors must heed HIPAA rules now more than ever.

CMS is testing a new payment system, and if flies, you might be seeing a lot more financial "bundles" coming your way than in the past.

On Jan. 31, CMS announced that over 500 organizations would be participating in the Bundled Payments for Care Improvement initiative, which bundles payments for episodes of care. "The objective of this initiative is to improve the quality of health care delivery for Medicare beneficiaries, while reducing program expenditures, by aligning the financial incentives of all providers," said Acting CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner in a Jan. 31 statement.

Because payments will be bundled, physicians will have to work carefully with hospitals, post-acute facilities, and other providers. The practices that have been selected to participate in the early phase program will begin in April, and another group of providers will begin the program in 2014. There are currently four models being tested and 48 episodes (ranging from amputation to stroke) that CMS will be testing for the bundled care project.

To read more about the program, visit <http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/bundled-payments/>.