Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

PHYSICIAN NOTES: CMS Updates Incident-to Regs--NPPs Take Note

Plus: Lawmakers plan legislation to save Medicare payment cuts for early June

If you-ve been wondering when CMS would finally clarify some of the more sticky issues involved in incident-to coding, that time
has come.

On May 2, CMS issued Trans-mittal 87, which revises the incident-to guidelines. The main revisions involve CMS-inclusion of nonphysician (NPP) practitioners in much of the language.

For instance, where the policy previously referred to a -physician's services,- it now notes that it refers to a -physician's NPP's professional services.-

You can find the new incident-to regulations on the CMS Web site at
www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R87BP.pdf.

In other news -

- **Practices are still waiting with bated breath** to find out whether lawmakers will halt the expected 10.6 percent physician payment cut due to take effect on July 1. Although congressional leaders seem to be taking their sweet time deciding whether to kill the cut for the remainder of 2008 or to let it take effect as planned, some lawmakers are working behind the scenes to put a stop to the proposed cuts.

Members of the **Senate Finance Committee** met on May 7 to discuss potential fixes to the payment cut, with attendees saying that a bill to stop the payment cut could be on the floor in early June.

Stay tuned for more information on this issue.

- **CMS will now cover artificial hearts when physicians implant them as part of an FDA-approved study**, according to a May 1 coverage decision.

-Our decision revises a long-standing non-coverage policy and allows beneficiary access to this advanced technology,- said **Kerry Weems**, CMS- acting administrator in a statement.

CMS- coverage decision answers the questions that studies must address to meet the requirements for Medicare coverage, according to Weems- statement.

You can review the full decision on the CMS Web site at
www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewtrackingsheet.asp?from2=viewtrackingsheet.asp&id=211&.