

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

PHYSICIAN NOTES: Hospital Readmissions Continue to Remain a Priority for CMS

Plus: N.J. Attorney General charges one practice with billing surgeries when in actuality, they allege that the practice performed physical therapy services.

The problem of hospital readmissions has moved up another notch on Medicare's priority list, now that the statistics are listed on the Hospital Compare Web site.

Rehospitalizations are "a possible indicator of how well the facility did the first time around," CMS notes in a release.

"One in five Medicare beneficiaries who are discharged from a hospital today will re-enter the hospital within a month," CMS says.

"Reducing the rate of hospital readmissions to improve quality and achieve savings are key components of President Obama's health care reform agenda." Specifically, the site will show new data on 30-day readmissions for heart attack (average 19.9 percent), heart failure (24.5 percent), and pneumonia (18.2 percent) cases. The measures are risk-adjusted, CMS adds.

"Readmissions are too common and costly, and ... they are often preventable," CMS maintains in a fact sheet about the new data.

You can find the data on the Hospital Compare site at www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov.