

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

PHYSICIAN NOTES: NPIs Won't Replace Medicare Numbers

Get ready for more paperwork headaches under a dual number system for surveys

Think the National Provider Identifier (NPI) numbers required in May will simplify your Medicare paperwork? Think again.

After the NPI implementation, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** will continue to issue and use Medicare/Medicaid Provider Numbers, CMS says in a March 2 memo to state survey agencies (S&C-07-16).

New name: To decrease confusion between the new numbers, CMS will call the Medicare Provider Number the -Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Certification Number,- or CCN.

The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires providers to use NPIs on all HIPAA-regulated transactions, such as claims, by May 23. But CMS will use the new CCN on all Survey and Certification and patient assessment transactions, the memo specifies.

-In some activities, both numbers will be used,- CMS says. You can review the memo online at www.cms.hhs.gov/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/downloads/SCLetter07-16.pdf.

In other news:

- CMS is reviewing all Medicare policies on erythropoiesis stimulating agents (ESAs) after the **Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) issued some new warnings regarding their use. CMS also opened a National Coverage Analysis (NCA) on the use of ESAs for conditions other than end-stage renal disease (ESRD). CMS hopes to have a national coverage determination (NCD) on ESAs soon.

- Medicare spending will outpace the growth of the economy and other government spending over the next few decades, warns a March 8 letter from the **Congressional Budget Office**. Slowing spending could involve providing incentives for doctors to follow quality standards or grouping doctors into -multispecialty units- that would share some responsibility for each patient's care and make more money if they save the government money.

- CMS posted a new letter with information about the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) at www.cms.hhs.gov/mlnmattersarticles/downloads/mm5558.pdf. Also, **Re-search & Markets** posted a new report on - Weighing the Benefits of Participation- in the PQRI online at www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/c51618.

- CMS also posted a guide to rural health for providers and suppliers at www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MedicareRuralHealthGuide.

- An increasing number of cancer survivors and slower growth in the pool of oncologists will result in a shortage of 2,500 to 4,800 cancer doctors by 2020, according to a new study commissioned by the **American Society of Clinical Oncology**. The **Association of American Medical Colleges Center for Workforce Studies** conducted the study, published in ASCO-s Journal of Oncology Practice.