

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

PHYSICIAN NOTES: RACs Go Wild On One Practice's Neupogen Billings

Medicare 'bounty hunters' coming to your state soon

Make your voice heard: The **Physicians Regulatory Issues Team** (PRIT) is actively soliciting complaints from the providers about the Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs), says **William Rogers**, the PRIT's head.

Right now, the RACs are operating only in California, New York and Florida, but that will soon change. -We really feel the good habits that we infuse them with now are going to help when they go nationwide,- Rogers says.

The PRIT just received one complaint from an oncology group, which the RAC had audited on its billings of Neupogen, a drug for chemotherapy side effect neutropenia. The RAC was asking for 10 to 12 charts per month every month for five months, despite not finding any problems, Rogers said. -The Baltimore staff that manage the RACs were very responsive,- he adds. Find PRIT online at www.cms.hhs.gov/PRIT/.

- Where the RACs find large amounts of overpayments,- your carrier or Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) should be able to perform a mass adjustment on a bunch of your claims, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) says in Transmittal 268 (CR 5496). For example, your carrier should be able to adjust all claims with the same CPT code, or a file with all duplicate claims.-

- Cardiologist **Krishnaswami Sriram** received an absurdly light sentence of five year's probation and \$1,258 in repayment after he pleaded guilty to health care fraud and tax fraud, the **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit** declared. The court said Sriram received between \$5 million and \$10 million in fraudulent billings, but he claimed his fraud was limited to two checks he received.

At the same time, the government showed he provided more than 24 hours worth of services on 401 days and billed for services to patients who were already dead. -On one day when Chicago was paralyzed by a snowstorm, he billed for 28 home visits,- the court added. The court remanded the case for re-sentencing.

- Three quarters of doctors re-reported considering patients out-of-pocket costs, such as copays and deductibles, when prescribing drugs, according to a survey in the Annals of Internal Medicine. But only 40 percent considered the cost to the patient when prescribing diagnostic tests. So cost-sharing programs that penalize patients for using more expensive care are unlikely to have much effect on doctors' decision-making, the study concluded.

- CMS has now launched Doctor's Office Quality Information Technology (DOQ-IT) University, a free Web-based tool to help small and midsized physician practices to adopt health IT. It's online at <http://elearning.qualitynet.org>.