

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Starting in January, You Can Enroll in EHR Incentive Program

Plus: CMS clears up flu shot coding confusion

You've heard the advantages of participating in CMS's Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Program (including \$44,000 per-physician bonus incentives over a five-year period), but you may not be sure how to enroll. CMS staffers cleared up that confusion during an Oct. 5 open door forum, where CMS's **Rachel Maisler** indicated that you must register on CMS's EHR incentive program's Web site, which will open in January 2011 for the Medicare program.

In addition, you must be enrolled in CMS's PECOS system and have an NPI, and you must use certified EHR technology. You can find details on how to determine which EHR systems are certified on www.healthit.hhs.gov.

Key dates: During the call, CMS reps also announced important dates involved in EHR participation. "Attestation, which is how you will report the objectives and measures for meaningful use and clinical quality measures, will begin in April of 2011, and we expect the first payments will be made in May of 2011," Maisler said.

Look for Combined Flu Shot

Flu vaccine: Now that the H1N1 immunization is part of the regular flu vaccine, a caller asked the CMS officials whether a new code will be developed to describe the combined flu shot, but CMS officials noted that no such code will be issued.

"We're continuing to use the same codes as last year, and my understanding is the H1N1 is part of the regular flu vaccine this year, so you'd bill what the appropriate flu vaccine code is," said CMS's **Amy Bassano**, during the call. High-dose flu vaccine code 90662 (Influenza virus vaccine, split virus, preservative free, enhanced immunogenicity via increased antigen content, for intramuscular use) has been added to the roster of codes that can be billed to Medicare, Bassano confirmed.

RACs: Another caller asked whether communication with recovery audit contractors (RACs) will ever take place electronically, rather than the current method of hard copy documentation, and CMS reps suggested that such plans may already be in the works to increase speed and efficiency. "We do have a demonstration going on right now to explore the effectiveness of electronic transmission of patient records and things like that when audits are being run, and once the testing has been done, then the expectation is that that will become an option for all of the different sorts of audits and other Medicare functions that require you to send medical records," said CMS's **William Rogers, MD**, during the call. "Obviously, since it's protected health information, we need to make sure we can do it in a safe manner."