

Eli's Rehab Report

Speech Spotlight: SLPs: Watch for Hiccups in Enrollment Process

Direct Medicare provider enrollment saga continues.

If you're a speech-language pathologist who's crossed all your t's and dotted all your i's this summer so you could start billing Medicare directly, beware of a small bump in the road.

SLPs in private practice were allowed to submit their Medicare enrollment applications starting June 2, 2009, and then begin billing Medicare for their services on July 1, 2009.

The problem: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services recently announced it still needs to modify the enrollment and claims processing system, according to an email to providers from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association.

In other words, if you've submitted an enrollment application, you will probably not receive a provider number by July 1, ASHA said. "SLPs can still submit applications, but the Medicare contractor will not be able to process the application until the modifications take place."

The good news: The "modifications" CMS says it needs to make should be finished by July 7, ASHA said.

Also, CMS reconfirmed that if you have submitted an enrollment application and don't have your provider number by July 1, you can retroactively bill for services starting on July 1, 2009 once you receive their Medicare provider number.

So if you've done your end of the deal, don't let that stop you from seeing Medicare patients beginning July 1. For questions or further information, ASHA instructed its members to contact **Kate Romanow**, director of health care regulatory advocacy, at kromanow@asha.org.