

OASIS Alert

OASIS News: Don't Worry About Mid-Year Coding Changes Don't Worry About Mid-Year Coding Changes

Rumors have been flying of rapid coding changes beginning in 2005.

If you budgeted for new coding books or software part way through the year, you're in for a pleasant surprise.

The mid-year change is reserved for technical changes in how clinicians deliver care, explains coding consultant **Prinny Rose Abraham** with **HIQM** in Minneapolis. These are generally procedure codes, she explains, and there needs to be a good reason before the groups in charge of coding changes agree to mid-year revisions. "The committee has said that there will not be an update this April," Abraham reassures agencies.

1. **The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has eliminated** the provision limiting Care Plan Oversight billing to the physician who certified or recertified the plan of care for the home care patient.

That means non-physician practitioners - nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists - now can bill for the service. Physician assistants can perform the service, but cannot independently bill for it, CMS notes in the final physician fee schedule published in the Nov. 15 Federal Register.

Editor's Note: For more information on the latest home health news, subscribe to Eli's Home Care Week at www.elihealthcare.com.

2. **The National Institutes of Health has launched a new Web site**, at www.betterdiabetescare.nih.gov, aimed at helping providers "make a difference in the way diabetes is prevented and treated." The site includes resources to help physicians assess their patients' needs, plan strategies to overcome issues, take actions and evaluate their progress.
3. **As of Jan. 1, 2005**, the standard home health episode payment will increase by 2.3 percent. The base pay rate for 2005 is \$2264.28 MSA (until Oct. 1, 2005).
4. **CMS has updated HAVEN software** with new 2005 diagnosis codes after all. The free OASIS software was giving users error messages when they used codes that took effect Oct. 1 (see Eli's OASIS Alert, Vol. 5, No. 11, p. 110), and CMS originally said it didn't plan an immediate fix. Agencies can download the ICD-9 update to HAVEN 6.2 at www.cms.hhs.gov/oasis/havensof.asp.
5. **Rumors have been circulating** that CMS is considering implementing a "mini-OASIS" assessment for the hospice benefit, explained one participant to the Nov. 9 home health open door forum. CMS shot down the rumor, saying it's not

working on such an instrument.