

Pain Management Coding Alert

Reader Question: Don't Fret Too Much Over Illegible Handwriting

Question: One of my physicians has handwriting so terrible that I'm afraid of what might happen if his files are ever pulled for review. Is there anything we can do about this?

North Carolina Subscriber

Answer: When Medicare payers come calling for your documentation to support claims, you may be faced with a dilemma □ submit illegible records that the MAC may not be able to read, or send nothing and expect to have to pay back all the money you collected for the services. Fortunately, one Part B MAC has a third option.

"If a provider feels that his/her notes may not be legible, he/she may translate these notes prior to submitting them to Palmetto GBA for review," the MAC said in a Nov. 25, 2015, tip on its website. "The note must be translated verbatim and signed by the provider." You must then submit both sets of notes □ the illegible and the translated version □ to the payer for review.