

ASTRO News

2008 Coding Supplement Available for Pre-order

You can now pre-order your copy of the *2008 Supplement to the ASTRO/ACR Guide To Radiation Oncology Coding 2007*. The updates found in the supplement complement the previous edition and include clarification on updates regarding SRS, SBRT, brachytherapy and radioimmunotherapy. The 2008 supplement package, including hard copy, Web and PDA versions, is available to members for \$75 and nonmembers for \$325. A package containing the 2007 guide, the 2008 supplement as well as the Web and PDA versions is available to members for \$175 and nonmembers for \$675. To reserve your copy, visit <http://www.astro.org/Shop/createorder.asp>.

CMS Selects Wisconsin Physician Service as CMD Replacement

Wisconsin Physician Service has been selected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as the Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) for Jurisdiction 5 (Parts A and B in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa). Wheatlands is expected to complete its transition of all work to WPS by March 1, 2008. This changeover is part of CMS' new MAC jurisdictions allocation which will promote greater efficiency in the processing of Medicare's billion claims a year. For more information, visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicareContractingReform>.

Medicare to Share Physician Performance Data

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt has announced a plan to make Medicare physician quality information available at the community level. Medicare will generate physician quality performance results using consensus-based quality measures. Mr. Leavitt has made transparency a priority for reforming the healthcare system. HHS already has publicly reported quality data for nursing homes, home health agencies and hospitals, and intends to move forward to disclose ambulatory care information. In September, HHS announced it would create a new system from which Medicare would draw data allowing consumers to compare quality and price among physicians and other providers. HHS is developing organizations, to be called Value Exchanges, to make Medicare data results available by the summer of 2008. Value Exchanges will bring together public- and private-sector physician measurement results to stimulate quality improvement and consumer choice in their communities. For more information, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/news/facts>.

Health Policy Mentoring Session on December 5

The Health Policy Committee will present its next Mentoring Program conference call on December 5, 2007, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern time. The topic for discussion, Analysis of Medicare Local Coverage Determinations and Managed Care Model Policies, will be presented by D. Jeffrey Demanes, M.D., incoming Co-chair of the Health Policy Committee. All ASTRO members interested in learning more about this aspect of health policy are invited to join the conference call. For more scheduling information, please contact Crystal Carter at crystalc@astro.org.

Patient Brochures Available Online in Arabic

As another resource to people living with a diagnosis of cancer, ASTRO now has patient brochures in Arabic available at <http://www.rtnswers.org/brochures/index.htm>. This is the third language for ASTRO — we now have brochures available in English, Spanish, and Arabic. These materials are all available free to physicians and patients for download. Special thanks to King Faisal Special Hospital and Research Center in Saudi Arabia for translating the materials. If you are interested in helping ASTRO translate our patient materials, please contact Katherine Bennett at katherineb@astro.org.

Important Information for Medicare Providers Using NPI Users

A recent update from CMS released a checklist of items to review if your claims using your NPI identifier are getting rejected: Check Medicare Reject Report messages. Make sure that your third-party administrators have been contacted by Medicare contractors concerning unmatched NPI/PIN combinations to Medicare NPI crosswalks. Check NPPES to validate the method your NPI was obtained. Check your NPPES data, especially if the Medicare legacy identifier belongs to the respective NPPES data. To view or edit your records, go to <http://nppes.cms.hhs.gov> and or call 1-800-465-3203. Ensure your Medicare enrollment information is up to date. Update, re-enroll or check your Taxpayer Identification Number.

As of October 31, 2007, all Medicare Part B claims are rejected by Medicare carriers if the NPI/PIN on the claims cannot be matched to the Medicare NPI crosswalk. For more information, visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0744.pdf>.

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