
CMS Manual System

Pub. 100-20 One-Time Notification

Department of Health &
Human Services (DHHS)
Centers for Medicare &
Medicaid Services (CMS)

Transmittal 54

Date: FEBRUARY 5, 2004

CHANGE REQUEST 3129

I. SUMMARY OF CHANGES: This One-Time Notification introduces “*Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers*” provider education articles to contractors and provides instructions on the usage of this new provider education vehicle.

NEW/REVISED MATERIAL - EFFECTIVE DATE: February 5, 2004

***IMPLEMENTATION DATE: March 8, 2004**

Disclaimer for manual changes only: The revision date and transmittal number apply only to red italicized material. Any other material was previously published and remains unchanged.

II. CHANGES IN MANUAL INSTRUCTIONS: (N/A if manual not updated.)

R/N/D	CHAPTER/SECTION/SUBSECTION/TITLE
N/A	

***III. FUNDING:**

These instructions shall be implemented within your current operating budget.

IV. ATTACHMENTS:

	Business Requirements
	Manual Instruction
	Confidential Requirements
X	One-Time Notification
	Recurring Update Notification

***Medicare contractors only**

Attachment - One-Time Notification

Pub. 100-20	Transmittal: 54	Date: February 5, 2004	Change Request 3129
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SUBJECT: Introduction of “*Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers*” and Instructions for Carrier/Intermediary Use of This New Provider Education Vehicle

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Background: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) understands that there are significant pressures placed on its carriers and intermediaries, including the DMERCs and the RHHIs, in order to prepare provider education materials on very short notice, once change requests (CRs) are released by CMS. Many CRs are released in a very short period of time with numerous CRs frequently released on the same day. Often, those CRs require the carriers/FIs to produce provider education material within a 1 or 2 week timeframe. This leads to a sizeable workload for Medicare contractors with scant time to perform that workload. Providers often complain that provider education materials are not timely enough. The process just described certainly contributes to the timeliness issue.

Another complaint often heard from providers and their associations is that provider education materials and answers are not always consistent. Obviously, when a number of entities of any type prepare information from the same source document, there will occur variations in the resulting message. This can arise in provider education material from different contractors being prepared that have slight differences due to different interpretations of the same material and/or using slightly different language to present the same information. In any event, the current process can lead to confusion, delays in preparing materials, or lower quality material due to the haste with which it must be prepared in today's environment.

In many instances, carriers/FIs have little time to do anything but publish CRs as released. That does not always present good, provider-friendly language to providers. The CRs are written with Medicare contractors (carriers, FIs, and the shared system and CWF maintainers) in mind. The language can be very technically oriented. Often, many of the details in a CR have little or no relevance to a provider.

To address these issues, CMS has decided to prepare consistent materials for contractor outreach for Medicare providers in a centralized fashion. This initiative is known as “Consistency in Medicare Contractor Outreach” or CMCOM. Under CMCOM, educational articles, with the heading of “*Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers,*” will be prepared concurrent with the process for clearing and releasing a related CR. The articles will be prepared by clinicians and medical coding/billing specialists, and will be written with the affected provider audience in mind, using the terminology that may be most appropriate for that audience. Information in CRs that is only relevant to Medicare contractors will be omitted from the articles. However, the

articles will reference the CR or other relevant information to provide additional information to those providers who wish to see it.

These articles will be published on CMS' Medlearn web page, which is the Web support page for the Medicare Learning Network. The specific page(s) for these articles will be located at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/matters> and will be known as the *Medlearn Matters* pages. The articles will be numbered in two ways, one for articles directly related to CRs and another schema for Special Edition articles. Articles related to CRs will have a number of MMnnnn, where the MM identifies the article as a CR-related one and the nnnn will correspond to the actual CR number. Special Edition articles will have a number of SEyyynn, where the SE denotes a special edition, the yy denotes the year the article was prepared and the nn will denote the edition or sequence number for that article during that year.

To inform you when we post new articles, we are establishing a listserv that you are required to join (see business requirements). All provider call center managers must also join the listserv, so they may be notified of these articles and can use the information as appropriate in providing important new information to customer service representatives.

B. Policy: Use of the "*Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers*" articles (as opposed to developing your own materials) is mandatory for Medicare contractors for CRs with effective dates on or after July 1, 2004. Medicare contractors are free to supplement the articles with information that may be relevant to their immediate provider community. **Please note that this process DOES NOT APPLY to program integrity CRs or issues. Such CRs and issues are to be handled in accordance with existing procedures.**

C. Provider Education: All FIs, carriers, and DMERCs shall inform their provider communities of this new communications vehicle by posting the attached Premier Edition of "*Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers*" on their Web site within 1 week of the release date of this instruction. Also, all carriers, FIs, and DMERCs shall publish this special edition article in their next regularly scheduled bulletin, and shall publish a message on their listserv(s) that informs affected providers and points them to the special edition article for more information. In addition, all carriers, FIs, and DMERCs shall post a hot link on their Medicare provider Web sites that links to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/matters> and the name of the link should include "*Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers*" as part of the link identification.

II. BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

"Shall" denotes a mandatory requirement

"Should" denotes an optional requirement

Requirement #	Requirements	Responsibility
3129.1	All appropriate contractor staff, including all provider call center managers, shall subscribe to the <i>Medlearn Matters</i> listserv (which will be available beginning February 5, 2004), which can be found at http://list.nih.gov/archives/medlearn-matters-1.html .	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs
3129.2	All provider call center managers shall use the posted " <i>Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers</i> " notices as another resource tool for customer service representatives to use, as appropriate, in responding to provider inquiries.	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs
3129.3	All contractors shall publish the premier edition " <i>Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers</i> " article on their Web site within one week of the release of this instruction (this applies to all carriers/FIs, including DMERCs and RHHIs).	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs
3129.4	All contractors shall publish the Premier Edition in their next regularly scheduled bulletin.	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs
3129.5	All contractors shall place a hot link on their Medicare provider page to <i>Medlearn Matters</i> . This shall be done within 30 days of the release date of this instruction.	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs
3129.6	All contractors shall regularly use " <i>Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers</i> " articles as part of their toolkit for educating Medicare providers about changes to Medicare claims processes or as reminders of important issues about Medicare claims processes.	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs
3129.7	All contractors are encouraged to suggest special edition article topics and should submit such suggestions, along with feedback on <i>Medlearn Matters</i> by using the link at: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/suggestform.asp .	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs

3129.8	<p><i>“Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers”</i> articles will not be prepared for all CRs. Where an article is prepared, the CR will note such. When an article is not prepared, Medicare contractors shall make their own determination as to the need for provider education or should rely on alternate language in the CR regarding provider education in the event there is no associated <i>“Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers”</i> article.</p>	Intermediaries, Carriers, & DMERCs
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III. SUPPORTING INFORMATION & POSSIBLE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

A. Other Instructions: N/A

X-Ref Requirement #	Instructions

B. Design Considerations: N/A

X-Ref Requirement #	Recommendation for Medicare System Requirements
N/A	

C. Interfaces: N/A

D. Contractor Financial Reporting /Workload Impact: N/A

E. Dependencies: N/A

F. Testing Considerations: N/A

IV. SCHEDULE, CONTACTS, AND FUNDING

<p>Effective Date: February 5, 2004</p> <p>Implementation Date: March 8, 2004</p> <p>Pre-Implementation Contact(s): Chrissy Stillwell-Deaner, (410) 786-5520</p> <p>Post-Implementation Contact(s): Regional Office</p>	<p>These instructions shall be implemented within your current operating budget.</p>
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Attachment

Medlearn Matters

Information for Medicare Providers



Effective Date: Immediately

Medlearn Matters Number: SE0401

Premier Edition

Announcing the New *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers* Educational Resource for Medicare Providers

Provider Types Affected

All Medicare providers.

Provider Action Needed

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and your Medicare Learning Network introduces *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers*, a new educational resource for Medicare Providers. *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers* is designed to inform you of important changes to the Medicare system in a user-friendly format that will accommodate your busy schedule.

Please let us know if these articles help you understand these changes more readily. Provide us with suggestions for improvements to articles. If there is a special topic of interest that you believe warrants an article, let us know and we will consider a special edition for that topic. To provide feedback, please go to:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/suggestform.asp>

Bookmark this page, use it frequently, and let us know how best to continue providing good service to you.

Background

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is committed to partnering with the Medicare physician, provider, and supplier communities so services to Medicare beneficiaries can be timely and of the highest quality. One way of providing the best services to Medicare patients is assuring that the providers of care have ready access to Medicare's latest coverage and reimbursement rules and policies in a brief, accurate, and easy-to-understand format.

CMS recognizes that the Medicare provider communities have been hampered by the number, frequency, and complexity of Medicare changes. CMS also appreciates the feedback from those same providers who indicate that Medicare rules and changes are not always relayed to them in an easy, timely, and consistent manner.

To address those issues, CMS has implemented a new initiative -- "Consistency in Medicare Contractor Outreach Material" or CMCOM, designed to provide more timely information on Medicare changes. The product of this effort, *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers*, is a series of articles prepared

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Medlearn Matters articles are prepared as a service to the public and are not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. Medlearn Matters articles may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

by actual clinicians and billing experts. *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers* articles are tailored, in content and language, to the specific provider types who are affected by Medicare changes.

Previously, each Medicare carrier and intermediary was responsible for crafting educational articles within days of release of the related Medicare change. With this new effort, the Medicare carrier or fiscal intermediary will still be responsible for local provider education. However, they will benefit from the availability of *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers* articles to support their efforts. These articles are easily accessible from the Medlearn Web site, which providers already access for other Medicare information.

Enlisting the expertise of medical professionals to develop these articles and providing them from a single location will result in more consistent, accurate, and timely information than in the past. This initiative supplements and should improve the ability of your carrier or intermediary to provide better service to you.

Those of you who have relied on Medicare Program Memorandums or Manual Transmittals on the Web, may be familiar with the Change Request (CR) documents and their accompanying CR numbers. Since you may have used the original CRs to get early information on upcoming changes, we think you will agree that those documents were not always clear as to provider impact and action needed.

One reason is that those CRs were written to provide instructions to Medicare carriers, intermediaries, and Medicare system maintainers. Thus, the focus of the message was quite different and probably contained more information than providers needed to know. The intent of *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers* articles is to help focus the information more toward providers, to give you only the information you need and thus reduce the amount of time you need to spend on that information.

The articles will be placed on the Medlearn Web site on the new *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers* page. Each article's number will usually correspond to the number of the Change Request (CR) that officially announced the change, but the number will be preceded by MM to show it is a related *Medlearn Matters...Information for Medicare Providers* article. There are exceptions, designated as Special Editions. These articles will be numbered in a distinctive manner, as "SEyyyn" where "SE" stands for Special Edition, the "yy" is the two-digit year the article was released, and "nn" is the number of the special edition for that year. Thus, this first Special Edition article is numbered as SE0301.

To view all the articles available , please visit:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/matters>

We hope you find this new vehicle of assistance to you and we invite your feedback.

Disclaimer

Medlearn Matters articles are prepared as a service to the public and are not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. Medlearn Matters articles may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.