Program Memorandum Carriers

Transmittal B-02-043   **Date: JULY 24, 2002**

CHANGE REQUEST 2096

SUBJECT: **Acceptance of Special Characters in the Common Working File (CWF) and the Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier (DMERC) Standard System**

Scope:

This Program Memorandum (PM) instructs CWF and the DMERC standard systems (ViPS) to make changes in order to accept special characters in a beneficiary's name and surname fields.

Background:

There are instances where a beneficiary may have certain special characters in their name or surname. These special characters are: apostrophes, hyphens, and periods. The claims processing systems require a beneficiary's name to identically match in all systems. However, when a DMERC sends a certificate of medical necessity (CMN) into CWF with one of the three special characters, CWF has been rejecting the claim with error codes C004, C005 and C102. Consequently, the DMERCs have been unable to process these types of claims.

Policy:

Since some beneficiary's have apostrophes, hyphens, or periods in their names, CWF and ViPS must make any systems changes necessary to support these characters.

Implementation:

1) CWF must make any necessary systems changes to accept apostrophes, hyphens, and periods in a beneficiary's name and surname fields.

2) CWF must cease sending C004, C005, and C102 rejects when receiving a CMN where a beneficiary's name or surname has one of the three special characters referenced in 1) above.

3) ViPS must make any systems changes necessary to support the use of the three special characters referenced in 1) above in a beneficiary's name or surname field.

4) Nothing in this PM is intended to require changes to either the National Standard Format or American National Standards Institute formats.

5) Nothing in this PM is intended to require the DMERCs to make changes to their free billing software.

Provider Education:

Not applicable.

CMS-Pub. 60B

The *effective date* for this PM is January 1, 2003.

The *implementation date* for this PM is January 1, 2003.

These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget.

This PM may be discarded after December 31, 2003.

If you have any questions, contact your appropriate regional office.