

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 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 SE0401.

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.

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