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# Program Memorandum Carriers

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Department of Health and  
Human Services (DHHS)  
HEALTH CARE FINANCING  
ADMINISTRATION (HCFA)

Transmittal B-00-74

Date: DECEMBER 21, 2000

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## CHANGE REQUEST 1433

**SUBJECT: Claims Processing Instructions for Carriers To Make Available Claims and Medical Records for a PSC Task Order Request for Medical Record Review**

The purpose of this Program Memorandum (PM) is to instruct the following carriers to make available Medicare beneficiary claims and medical records to Aspen Systems Corporation (Aspen), Rockville, Maryland, a PSC contractor. These carriers include: **National Heritage Insurance Company** (Northern CA, MA, ME, NH and VT) **Empire Medicare Services** (NY and NJ), **First Coast Services Options** for Florida, **TrailBlazer Health Enterprises** (TX, DE, DC, MD and VA), **Wisconsin Physicians Service** (WI, IL, MI) and **Noridian Government Services** (AK, OR, WA, IA, AZ, CO, HI, NV, ND, SD and WY).

Aspen has been awarded a modification to its existing PSC task order to develop vignettes for selected Evaluation and Management (E/M) services. These vignettes will be used with the draft 2000 Evaluation and Management Documentation Guidelines.

We have asked Aspen staff to target a total of 2000 medical review records from several contractors. The universe of claims from which they will draw a statistical sample should represent clean, postpaid claims (the original carrier review decision agreed with the level of E/M service as submitted by the physician). Selection of this universe will be based on specific E/M CPT codes and by physician specialty.

**Code Ranges:**  
**99201 - 99215 (excluding 99211)**  
**99221 - 99223**  
**99231 - 99233**  
**99241 - 99245**  
**99251 - 99255**  
**99281 - 99285**

The physician specialties to be selected include the following: Internal Medicine, Family Practice, Pediatrics, General Surgery, Neurology, Thoracic Surgery, Psychiatry, Ophthalmology, Urology, Orthopedics, Otolaryngology, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Neurosurgery, Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Rheumatology, Endocrinology, Pulmonary, Osteopathy, Emergency Room Services and Podiatry.

The statistical sample developed by Aspen from either the HCFA database or from the database at individual carriers will be made available to the respective carriers to expedite retrieval of the associated medical records. The total number of claims to be retrieved from all the selected carriers and matched to physician medical records for further review by Aspen will total 2,000 claims and medical records. **Carriers should remove all personal identifying information from the selected medical records, before providing it to Aspen, to protect the confidentiality of both Medicare beneficiaries and physicians.**

HCFA anticipates a limited workload on carriers for this project. There are no system changes associated with this request. However, if additional funds are required to complete this task in an effective and timely fashion to meet our timeframes, carriers may request additional funding. We ask that the carriers selected for medical record retrieval, that believe additional funding is needed, to submit a supplemental budget request to the Program Integrity Group, Office of Financial Management through the usual process undertaken by carriers.

Aspen is to develop 600 draft vignettes and HCFA staff will be reviewing these as they are developed. HCFA will designate up to five (5) Medicare carriers to review the draft vignettes and comment regarding use of the draft vignettes for an effective medical review process. Aspen staff will provide HCFA with any carrier suggestions (e.g., formatting, presentation, effectiveness for reviewers) for vignette revisions. HCFA will revise and incorporate as appropriate.

Additionally, Aspen will be contacting up to five (5) of the selected carriers to obtain copies of educational materials and medical review protocols that these carriers use in reviewing E/M physician services in the contractor medical review process. Aspen staff will compile this material for HCFA and consolidate the information into a "best practices" single set of material to be used for educating physicians and contractor review staff in future testing of E/M documentation guidelines.

When contacted by Aspen staff, contractors shall take the necessary steps to ensure that appointments are scheduled and conducted in a timely manner. Aspen will follow up to provide additional information to facilitate completion of this important project.

**The *effective date* for this PM is November 1, 2000.**

**The *implementation date* for this PM is December 21, 2000.**

**These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget.**

**This PM may be discarded after October 31, 2001.**

**If you have any questions, contact Paul Rudolf, 410-786-6960.**