

# DR. KNOW

We won't change the way you do billing...we'll change the way you do business!

An e-newsletter created by **PLEXUS HEALTH SOLUTIONS, INC.**

## MC FEES FOR 2007 *F.Y.I.*

Beginning January 1, 2007 the new monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$93.50 if the beneficiary's income is less than \$80,000 annually. The monthly premium is pro rated higher if their income is higher.

Medicare Part A deductible will be \$992; Part B deductible will be \$131.

[www.cms.hhs.gov/MCPSS/](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MCPSS/)

## McCLELLAN RESIGNS *CMS Administrator*

Mark McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., has resigned and left his post as CMS Administrator in October of this year. He accepted this post in 2004 replacing Tommy Thompson, former governor of Wisconsin.

[www.cms.hhs.gov/cmsleadership/08](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/cmsleadership/08)

## PRIVACY RULES TOO TIGHT *HIPAA Has Everyone Scared*

Plexus recently had the need to call a local (Kenosha, WI area) hospital and request a mailing address for an out-of-state insurance carrier. We could not get through to the carrier and since the service originated in the hospital, we decided to see where they were sending their claims. Keep in mind that we had all the patient information and the insurance name and ID numbers, just not the mailing address.

Come to find out, this hospital uses a billing service for all of their out-of-state claims.

The local billing department gave us the third party's phone number and we called requesting this information.

The original person who answered the phone would not help us and transferred us to a supervisor. This person looked up the information and asked me to hold. She came back and stated that since the patient had not given them permission to talk to us she would not divulge the information we needed.

HIPAA says that for continuity of care, permission from a patient is not necessary for this kind of information.

November 15, 2006

## Volume No. 1 Issue No. 8

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## MODIFIERS

### *Be Sure You Know How To Use Them*

An incorrectly used modifier can “red flag” you for an audit just like the improper use of an ICD-9 or CPT-4 code.

Be sure you know the proper use of them especially if you are in a specialty practice.

There is a complete listing of modifiers in your CPT-4 handbook just before the Surgery Section. You should go over them each year when you receive your updated book and check the descriptions for any changes and modifier numbers for any additions or deletions.

Be sure to call Plexus if you are in doubt of the use of any modifier(s).

## THE 110<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

### *Healthcare Items On Their Agenda*

When the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes they will be discussing the following healthcare agenda items. Be sure to be in touch with your local Congressman and/or your State associations to see what is decided and how your practice may be affected.

- \*Medicare physician fees schedule reform
- \*Stem cell research
- \*Repeal the ban on the ability to negotiate Rx drug prices under Medicare
- \*Medicare Advantage – impact on access & costs
- \*Expanding health insurance coverage for targeted populations (with an anti-HAS bend)
- \*FDA oversight hearings – drug safety
- \*NIH reauthorization
- \*HHS oversight hearing on CMS

## MEDICARE APPEALS

### *Five Different Methods*

This may be surprising to you but Medicare has five different appeal methods you can choose to go through on medical claims processing. These are provided as a result of the Benefits Improvement & Protection Act of 2000 (BIPA). Qualified Independent Contractors (QIC) conducts these appeals. The QIC's are private insurance companies that are called carriers, which perform claims functions for CMS. In the State of Wisconsin the QIC is WPS.

The appeal methods (listed in order of occurrence) are as follows:

- \*Re-determination by the carrier
- \*Reconsideration by a QIC
- \*Hearing by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ)
- \*Review by the Medicare Appeals Council
- \*Judicial review in U.S. District Courts

Plexus has never had to go past the second type of appeal for any of our clients. Usually, after the first step we attain a satisfactory outcome.

### ARE YOU ON-LINE WITH PLEXUS YET?

#### *Free Service To Our Clients*

As of November 1, 2006 Plexus is offering free on-line viewing of your practice on our system. Immediately know what your patients' balance is and collect it!

With only a 30 minute set up you can be more efficient and improve cash flow. Give us a call today and see how easy it is and what hardware specifications you need to perform this service.

[www.plexushealthsolutions.com](http://www.plexushealthsolutions.com)