



News Flash - Test Your Medicare Claims Now! After you have submitted claims containing both National Provider Identifiers (NPIs) and legacy identifiers and those claims have been paid, Medicare urges you to send a small batch of claims now with only the NPI in the primary provider fields. If the results are positive, begin increasing the number of claims in the batch. (Reminder: For institutional claims, the primary provider fields are the Billing and Pay-to Provider fields. For professional claims, the primary provider fields are the Billing, Pay-to, and Rendering Provider fields. If the Pay-to Provider is the same as the Billing Provider, the Pay-to Provider does not need to be identified.)

MLN Matters Number: MM5820

Related Change Request (CR) #: 5820

Related CR Release Date: December 21, 2007

Effective Date: September 10, 2007

Related CR Transmittal #: R79NCD

Implementation Date: January 22, 2008

Nebulized Beta Adrenergic Agonist Therapy for Lung Diseases

Provider Types Affected

Providers and suppliers who bill Medicare contractors (fiscal intermediaries (FI), regional home health intermediaries (RHHI), carriers, Medicare Administrative Contractors (A/B MAC), and Durable Medical Equipment Contractors (DME MAC) for nebulized beta adrenergic agonist therapy services for lung diseases.

What You Need to Know

CR 5820, from which this article is taken, provides that (effective September 10, 2007) no National Coverage Determination (NCD) for nebulized beta adrenergic agonist therapy for lung diseases is appropriate. Therefore, you should make sure that your billing staffs are aware that local contractors will continue to make Section 1862(a)(1)(A) reasonable and necessary decisions through a local coverage determination process or case-by-case adjudication.

Note: No changes to process or policy are being made with CR5820.

Background

Lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma are characterized by airflow limitation that may be partially or completely

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reversible. Pharmacologic treatment with bronchodilators (intended to improve the movement of air into and from the lungs by relaxing and dilating the bronchial passageways) is used to prevent and/or control daily symptoms that may cause disability for persons with these diseases.

Beta adrenergic agonists (which can be administered via nebulizer, metered dose inhaler, orally, or dry powdered inhaler) are a commonly prescribed class of bronchodilator drug. For example, nebulized beta adrenergic agonist with racemic albuterol has been used for many years, and more recently, levalbuterol, the (R) enantiomer of racemic albuterol, has been used in some patient populations.

Because of concerns regarding the appropriate use of nebulized beta adrenergic agonist therapy for lung disease, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) internally generated a formal request for a national coverage determination (NCD) to determine when treatment with a nebulized beta adrenergic agonist is reasonable and necessary for Medicare beneficiaries with COPD.

The examination of the published medical evidence did not provide sufficient information that would enable CMS to define, at this time, specific populations of patients who would benefit from a particular treatment with particular medications. Moreover, because an NCD is defined, in part, as including “whether or not a particular item or service is covered nationally” under title XVIII, sections 1862(l), 1869(f)(1)(B); CMS does not believe a national policy is possible or prudent at this time.

Therefore, effective with dates of service on and after September 10, 2007, Medicare contractors will continue to make 1862(a)(1)(A) reasonable and necessary decisions and process claims for nebulized beta adrenergic agonist therapy for lung disease through their local coverage determination process or case-by-case adjudication.

Note: No changes to process or policy are being made with CR5820.

Additional Information

You can find the official instruction, CR 5820, issued to your FI, RHHI, Carrier, A/B MAC, or DME MAC by visiting <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R79NCD.pdf> on the CMS website. You will find the *Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual*, Chapter 1, Part 4 (Sections 200 – 310.1) Coverage Determinations, Section 200.2 - Nebulized Beta Adrenergic Agonist Therapy for Lung Diseases – (Effective September 10, 2007) as an attachment to that CR.

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If you have any questions, please contact your Medicare contractor at their toll-free number, which may be found at

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip>
on the CMS website.

News Flash - It's seasonal flu time again! If you have Medicare patients who haven't yet received their flu shot, you can help them reduce their risk of contracting the seasonal flu and potential complications by recommending an annual influenza and a one-time pneumococcal vaccination. Medicare provides coverage for flu and pneumococcal vaccines and their administration. – And don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff. Protect yourself, your patients, and your family and friends. Get Your Flu Shot – Not the Flu! Remember - Influenza vaccination is a covered Part B benefit but the influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug. Health care professionals and their staff can learn more about Medicare's coverage of adult immunizations and related provider education resources, by reviewing Special Edition *MLN Matters* article SE0748 at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0748.pdf> on the CMS website.

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