

Information and Education Resources for Medicare Fee-for-Service Health Care Professionals



Provider Types Affected

All Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) physicians, providers, and other health care professionals



Provider Action Needed

This fact sheet is informational only and is intended to notify Medicare FFS physicians and other health care professionals about the information and education resources that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have developed to help meet their Medicare business needs.



Background

One of the goals of CMS is to give Medicare's 1.2 million physicians and other health care professionals the information they need to understand the program, be aware of changes, and bill correctly. By making information and education resources easily accessible, understandable, and as timely as possible, FFS physicians and other health care professionals will be better able to submit bills correctly the first time, receive reimbursements more quickly, and spend less time dealing with paperwork. All of this can result in more time to spend on patient care. We are committed to accomplishing this goal by offering Medicare physicians and other health care professionals a variety of educational products and services and using various information delivery systems to reach the broadest and most appropriate audiences possible.



Three-Pronged Provider Information and Outreach Approach

CMS relies on the cooperative efforts of its Medicare contractors, Regional Offices, and Central Office provider communications staff to deliver a seamless information and outreach approach to Medicare FFS physicians and other health care professionals.

1) Medicare Contractors

Medicare contractors, also called Fiscal Intermediaries and Carriers, serve as the primary point of contact for most Medicare FFS physicians and other health care professionals. These contractors provide toll-free telephone lines for inquiries, conduct outreach and education, and often interact with local professional associations. Their outreach and education activities include in-person seminars, bulletins and newsletters, speaker appearances, and quick dissemination of timely information via websites and provider-specific electronic listservs (mailing lists). If you have questions about the Medicare Program, you should first get in touch with your Fiscal Intermediary or Carrier. To find Fiscal Intermediary and Carrier contact information, please visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo/>. Once there, scroll down to the "Downloads" section to find the Provider Call Center Toll-Free Numbers Directory.

2) CMS Regional Offices

Staff at CMS' Regional Offices are active with the physician and other health care professional communities at State and local levels through their relationships with State and local associations and big Medicare billers, and through outreach activities such as hosting provider-oriented meetings and furnishing speakers at professional conferences. CMS' Regional Offices are located at various locations around the country. You can find their contact information at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/about/regions/>

3) CMS Central Office in Baltimore, Maryland

The Provider Communications Staff at the CMS Central Office work closely with both Medicare contractors and Regional Office staff to ensure that consistent and coordinated Medicare information and resources are available to all FFS physicians and other health care professionals. Education and outreach activities from the CMS Central Office focus on accuracy, consistency and timeliness. Given the hectic schedules of today's health care professionals, most of our current initiatives are aimed at fostering a "self-service" environment so that

physicians and other health care professionals can access information and education 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As a result, we have significantly increased the use of the Internet as a key tool for continuous improvement to customer service. Our efforts have resulted in a variety of products and services, such as:

- **Medicare Learning Network** ~ The Medicare Learning Network (MLN) is the brand name for official CMS FFS physician and other health care professional educational products and is designed to promote national consistency of Medicare FFS provider information developed for CMS initiatives. Go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo> for more details. Products range from web-based training courses, comprehensive training guides, brochures, and fact sheets to CD-ROMs and videos. All MLN products are free of charge and can be ordered or downloaded from the MLN Web page located at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts>.
- **MLN Matters Articles** ~ One of the best sources for the latest Medicare FFS information is “MLN Matters...Information for Medicare Fee-for-Service Health Care Professionals” national articles, which are available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles>. These articles are designed to give physicians and other health care professionals and their staff easy-to-understand information related to new and recently changed Medicare rules and policies. On the MLN Matters web page, you will find various search tools for easy access to each article and its corresponding program instructions, if applicable. You can join the MLN Matters mailing list to receive electronic notification when new articles are released by visiting <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/maillinglists/>.
- **CMS Provider Web Pages** ~ CMS has designed provider-specific web pages to assist individual physicians and other health care professionals in more quickly obtaining information relevant to them. These web pages are customized, one-stop resources for physicians and other health care professionals and include spotlights on items such as new regulations and hot Medicare topics, as well as links to general information on enrollment, billing, conditions of participation, publications, education, data, and statistics. We also have Specialty Physician web pages that provide links of special interest to physician specialties. From the CMS Home Page at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>, you can access physician, provider and other health care professional pages by clicking on “All Fee-for-Service Providers” under the “Browse by Provider Type” section in the lower right hand side of the page. You can also access the Provider Center page by clicking on <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/provider.asp>.
- **Listserv Messages** ~ CMS offers a way for physicians and other health care professionals to receive consistent and accurate provider-oriented information regarding recent news, policy changes, and updates via our CMS Provider Mailing Lists, also referred to as listservs. These electronic mailing lists enable providers to receive e-mails about the latest CMS initiatives. All that is required to subscribe is a name and a valid e-mail address. To subscribe just visit the CMS mailing Lists Web page at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/maillinglists/> on the CMS website. For more details about provider-specific listservs, a copy of our Listserv Fact Sheet may be obtained from the Medicare Learning Network at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts>.
- **Open Door Forums** ~ CMS is very interested in hearing from and interacting with physicians and other health care professionals who deliver quality health care to our nation’s beneficiaries. We continue to emphasize our responsiveness through an ongoing series of Open Door Forums that provide an environment for interactive dialogue. Forums are chaired by senior-level Agency officials and co-chaired by CMS Regional Office officials. For more information, please visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/>.
- **Exhibit Program** ~ CMS hosts exhibit booths at physician and other health care professional association meetings. The CMS Exhibit Program provides an excellent opportunity for CMS Central and Regional Office staff to have direct contact with the Medicare provider community to listen to issues, concerns, and challenges and to share timely and relevant information. If you are interested in having a CMS exhibit at your national conference, please contact David Clark at David.Clark@cms.hhs.gov.



Physician and Other Health Care Professional Feedback

Although we try our best to be responsive to the Medicare FFS physician and other health care professional’s education and information needs, we cannot do it alone. Your feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of our educational resources is very important to us as it helps ensure that we are “getting it right.” Please submit your comments or suggestions to the Medicare Learning Network’s mailbox at MLN@cms.hhs.gov. We look forward to hearing from you!