

## Medicare Reimbursement Advisory

July 2008

Once again, Medicare is holding your money! Over the last weekend in June, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) instructed carriers to temporarily hold claims. In its statement, CMS said:

*"To the extent possible, CMS wants to work with Congress, health care providers and the beneficiary community to avoid any disruption in the delivery and payment of physician and non-physician practitioner services beginning on July 1. In this regard, the agency plans to instruct its contractors to not process any physician and non-physician practitioner claims for the first 10 business days of July. Under current law, electronic claims are not to be paid any sooner than 14 days (29 days for paper claims) and not later than the 30th day they are submitted (otherwise, CMS must pay interest on those claims). By holding claims for health care services that are delivered on or after July 1, CMS will not be making any payments on the 10.6 percent reduction until July 15, at the earliest. Meanwhile, all claims for services delivered on or before June 30 will be processed and paid in regular order."*

Due to this delay in payment during the beginning of July, it is assumed that physicians will be experiencing delays throughout the entire month of July.

We also want to take the time out to remind you to contact your senators regarding the Medicare Improvement Act for Patients and Providers (H.R. 6331). This bill would halt the 10.6% cuts in physician payment scheduled for July 1, along with the projected 5% cut for 2009. This bill would also continue the .5% payment increase for 2008 and an additional 1.1% increase for 2009.

After the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, the Senate will vote again on legislation to retroactively fix this 10.6% cut in payment. MGMA, and the American Medical Association, are teaming up, along with other physician specialty societies and ask that you please use their unified grassroots hotline at 800-833-6354 to call Congress.

*Business Dynamics Limited is pleased to provide this advisory as general information to assist Spine Specialty Practices in maintaining compliance, while maximizing reimbursement. Please consult your regional carrier guidelines, for specific advice on individual claims issues, or call our Coding Hotline @ 1-516-294-4118.*

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