

Medicare Rx Update: December 20, 2006

'Tis the season... to prepare for the start of the January 2007 plan year

As the end of the enrollment period for the 2007 Medicare Drug Benefit year fast approaches, we have been busy trying to make sure we have a smooth transition from 2006 to 2007 at the pharmacy in January. Assuring that all pharmacy systems are locked and loaded with up to date Plan and beneficiary information for the 2007 Plan year is high on our priority list.

By now, Part D plan sponsors should have updated their payer sheets for any billing changes associated with their 2007 Part D benefits. CMS' Part D contracts with Plans require plans to ensure that all information necessary for online, real-time billing is available at the point-of-sale. Any Part D sponsors who have not already communicated 2007 changes in plan names, BIN/PCNs, or other relevant billing information to all contracted pharmacies have been notified by CMS that they must do so immediately.

Additionally, CMS has been tracking the submission of beneficiary "4Rx" data by Plans to make sure that we have as much information in the E1 database as possible so that pharmacists will have updated beneficiary plan information at their finger-tips in January. While the E1 database may not have complete data on some last minute enrollees or plan switchers on January 1, we are doing everything possible to load this information as soon as it is transmitted to minimize the burden on the pharmacist at the beginning of the 2007 plan year.

...and one more reminder about communicating beneficiary rights

Plan network pharmacies are REQUIRED to post or distribute notices for use in instructing enrollees to contact their plans to obtain a coverage determination or request an exception for an off-formulary drug. Despite this requirement, some beneficiaries are reporting that they have not been notified of their rights at the pharmacy counter.

Standard forms are available to ensure that beneficiaries are aware of their rights. CMS has provided a model pharmacy notice about the formulary exceptions and appeals process that should be posted or given to beneficiaries interested in contacting a Plan about a coverage determination or formulary exception:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PrescriptionDrugCovContra/Downloads/PharmacyNoticeApproved.zip>

Click here for instructions for using the notice:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PrescriptionDrugCovContra/Downloads/PharmacyNoticeInstructions.pdf>

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