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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

[CMS-1409-N]

Medicare Program; First Semi-Annual Meeting of the Advisory Panel
on Ambulatory Payment Classification Groups--February 18-20, 2009

AGENCY: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Department of Health
and Human Services.

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ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the first semi-annual meeting of the
Advisory Panel on Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) Groups (the
Panel) for 2009. The purpose of the Panel is to review the APC groups
and their associated weights and to advise the Secretary of the
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (the Secretary) and the
Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
(the Administrator) concerning the clinical integrity of the APC groups
and their associated weights. We will consider the Panel's advice as we
prepare the proposed and final rules that would update the hospital
Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) for CY 2010.

DATES: Meeting Dates: We are scheduling the first semi-annual meeting
in 2009 for the following dates and times:

Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (e.s.t.)
\1\
Thursday, February 19, 2009, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (e.s.t.) \1\

\1\ The times listed in this notice are approximate times;
consequently, the meetings may last longer than listed in this
notice--but will not begin before the posted times.

Friday, February 20, 2009, 8 a.m. to 12 noon (e.s.t.) \2\

\2\ If the business of the Panel concludes on Thursday, February
19, 2009, there will be no Friday (February 20, 2009) meeting.

Deadlines:

Deadline for Hardcopy Comments/Suggested Agenda Topics--5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Thursday, January 15, 2009

Deadline for Hardcopy Presentations--5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Thursday, January 15, 2009

Deadline for Attendance Registration--5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Deadline for Special Accommodations--5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Submission of Materials to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO):

Because of staffing and resource limitations, we cannot accept written comments and presentations by FAX, nor can we print written comments and presentations received electronically for dissemination at the meeting.

Only hardcopy comments and presentations can be reproduced for public dissemination. All hardcopy presentations must be accompanied by Form CMS-20017 (revised 01/07). The form is now available through the CMS Forms Web site. The Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for linking to this form is as follows: <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/leaving.cgi?from=leavingFR.html&log=linklog&to=http://www.cms.hhs.gov/cmsforms/downloads/cms20017.pdf>.

Presenters must use the most recent copy of CMS-20017 (updated 01/07) at the above URL. Additionally, presenters must clearly explain the action(s) that they are requesting CMS to take in the appropriate section of the form. They must also clarify their relationship to the organization that they represent in the presentation.

Note: Issues that are vague, or that are outside the scope of the APC Panel's purpose, will not be considered for presentations and comments. There will be no exceptions to this rule. We appreciate your cooperation on this matter.

We are also requiring electronic versions of the written comments and presentations, in addition to the hardcopies.

In summary, presenters and/or commenters must do the following:

Send both electronic and hardcopy versions of their presentations and written comments by the prescribed deadlines.

Send electronic transmissions to the e-mail address below.

Do not send pictures of patients in any of the documents unless their faces have been blocked out.

Do not send documents electronically that have been archived.

Mail (or send by courier) to the DFO all hardcopies, accompanied by Form CMS-20017 (revised 01/07), if they are presenting, as specified in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this notice.

Commenters are not required to send Form CMS-20017 with their written comments.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Auditorium, CMS Central Office, 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information, contact: Shirl Ackerman-Ross, DFO, CMS, CMM, HAPG, DOC, 7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop C4-05-17, Baltimore, MD 21244-1850. Phone: (410) 786-4474.

Note: We recommend that you advise couriers of the following information: When delivering hardcopies of presentations to CMS, if no one answers at the above phone number, please call (410) 786-4532 or (410) 786-9316.

E-mail address for comments, presentations, and registration requests is CMS APCPanel@cms.hhs.gov.

Note: There is NO underscore in this e-mail address; there is a SPACE between CMS and APCPanel.

News media representatives must contact our Public Affairs Office at (202) 690-6145.

Advisory Committees' Information Lines:

The phone numbers for the CMS Federal Advisory Committee Hotline are 1-877-449-5659 (toll free) and (410) 786-9379 (local).

WEB SITES:

The following information is available on the CMS Web site at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/leaving.cgi?from=leavingFR.html&log=linklog&to=http://www.cms.hhs.gov/FACA/05_AdvisoryPanelonAmbulatoryPaymentClassificationGroups.asp%23TopOfPage in order to obtain the following information:

Note: There is an UNDERSCORE after FACA/05 (like this--); there is no space.

Additional information on the APC meeting agenda topics
Updates to the Panel's activities
Copies of the current Charter
Membership requirements.

You may also search information about the APC Panel and its membership in the FACA database at the following URL:

<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/leaving.cgi?from=leavingFR.html&log=linklog&to=https://www.fido.gov/facadata base/public.asp>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Secretary is required by section 1833(t)(9)(A) of the Social Security Act (the Act) to consult with an expert, outside advisory panel on the clinical integrity of the APC groups and weights established under the Medicare hospital OPPS.

The APC Panel meets up to three times annually. The Charter requires that the Panel must be fairly balanced in its membership in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed. The Panel consists of up to 15 members who are representatives of providers and a Chair.

Each Panel member must be employed full-time by a hospital, hospital system, or other Medicare provider subject to payment under the OPPS. The Secretary or Administrator selects the Panel membership based upon either self-nominations or nominations submitted by Medicare providers and other interested organizations.

All members must have technical expertise to enable them to participate fully in the Panel's work. Such expertise encompasses hospital payment systems; hospital medical care delivery systems;

provider billing systems; APC groups; Current Procedural Terminology codes; and alpha-numeric Health Care Common Procedure Coding System codes; and the use of, and payment for, drugs, medical devices, and other services in the outpatient setting, as well as other forms of relevant expertise. Details regarding membership requirements for the APC Panel are found on the CMS and FACA Web sites as listed above.

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The Panel presently consists of the following members:

E.L. Hambrick, M.D., J.D., Chair, a CMS Medical Officer.
Gloryanne Bryant, B.S., RHIA, RHIT, CCS.
Patrick A. Grusenmeyer, Sc.D., FACHE.
Kathleen Graham, R.N., MSHA, CPHQ, ACM.
Judith T. Kelly, B.S.H.A., RHIT, RHIA, CCS.
Michael D. Mills, PhD.
Thomas M. Munger, M.D., FACC.
Agatha L. Nolen, D.Ph., M.S.
Randall A. Oyer, M.D.
Beverly Khnie Philip, M.D.
Russ Ranallo, M.S., B.S.
James V. Rawson, M.D.
Michael A. Ross, M.D., FACEP.
Patricia Spencer-Cisek, M.S., APRN-BC, AOCN[reg].
Kim Allen Williams, M.D., FACC, FABC.
Robert M. Zwolak, M.D., PhD., FACS.

II. Agenda

The agenda for the February 2009 meeting will provide for discussion and comment on the following topics as designated in the Panel's Charter:

Addressing whether procedures within an APC group are similar both clinically and in terms of resource use.

Evaluating APC group weights.

Reviewing the packaging of OPSS services and costs, including the methodology and the impact on APC groups and payment.

Removing procedures from the inpatient list for payment under the OPSS.

Using single and multiple procedure claims data for CMS's determination of APC group weights.

Addressing other technical issues concerning APC group structure.

Note: The subject matter before the Panel will be limited to these and related topics. Issues related to calculation of the OPSS conversion factor, charge compression, pass-through payments, or wage adjustments are not within the scope of the Panel's purpose. Therefore, these issues will not be considered for presentations and/or comments. There will be no exceptions to this rule. We appreciate your cooperation on this matter.

)The Panel may use data collected or developed by entities and organizations, other than DHHS and CMS, in conducting its review. We recommend organizations submit data for the Panel's and CMS staff's review.

III. Written Comments and Suggested Agenda Topics

Send hardcopy and electronic written comments and suggested agenda topics to the DFO at the address indicated above. The DFO must receive these items by 5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Thursday, January 15, 2009. There will be no exceptions. We appreciate your cooperation on this matter.

The written comments and suggested agenda topics submitted for the February 2009 APC Panel meeting must fall within the subject categories outlined in the Panel's Charter and as listed in the Agenda section of this notice.

IV. Oral Presentations

Individuals or organizations wishing to make 5-minute oral presentations must submit hardcopy and electronic versions of their presentations to the DFO by 5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Thursday, January 15, 2009, for consideration.

The number of oral presentations may be limited by the time available. Oral presentations should not exceed 5 minutes in length for an individual or an organization.

The Chair may further limit time allowed for presentations due to the number of oral presentations, if necessary.

V. Presenter and Presentation Information

All presenters must submit Form CMS-20017 (revised 01/07). Hardcopies are required for oral presentations; however, electronic submissions of Form CMS-20017 are optional. The DFO must receive the following information from those wishing to make oral presentations:

Form CMS-20017 completed with all pertinent information identified on the first page of the presentation.

One hardcopy of presentation.

Electronic copy of presentation.

Personal registration information as described in the Meeting Attendance section below.

Those persons wishing to submit comments only must send hardcopy and electronic versions of their comments, but they are not required to submit Form CMS-20017.

VI. Oral Comments

In addition to formal oral presentations, there will be opportunity during the meeting for public oral comments, which will be limited to 1 minute for each individual and a total of 3 minutes per organization.

VII. Meeting Attendance

The meeting is open to the public; however, attendance is limited to space available. Attendance will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis.

Persons wishing to attend this meeting, which is located on Federal property, must e-mail the DFO to register in advance no later than 5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Wednesday, February 11, 2009. A confirmation will be sent to the requester(s) via return e-mail.

The following personal information must be e-mailed to the DFO by the date and time above:

Name(s) of attendee(s);

Title(s);
Organization;
E-mail address(es); and
Telephone number(s).

VIII. Security, Building, and Parking Guidelines

The following are the security, building, and parking guidelines:

Persons attending the meeting including presenters must be registered and on the attendance list by the prescribed date.

Individuals who are not registered in advance will not be permitted to enter the building and will be unable to attend the meeting.

Attendees must present photographic identification to the Federal Protective Service or Guard Service personnel before entering the building.

Security measures include inspection of vehicles, inside and out, at the entrance to the grounds.

In addition, all persons entering the building must pass through a metal detector.

All items brought into CMS including personal items, for example desktops, cell phones, and palm pilots, are subject to physical inspection.

The public may enter the building 30 to 45 minutes before the meeting convenes each day.

All visitors must be escorted in areas other than the lower and first-floor levels in the Central Building.

The main-entrance guards will issue parking permits and instructions upon arrival at the building.

IX. Special Accommodations

Individuals requiring sign-language interpretation or other special accommodations must send a request for these services to the DFO by 5 p.m. (e.s.t.), Wednesday, February 11, 2009.

Authority: (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.773, Medicare--Hospital Insurance; and Program No. 93.774, Medicare--Supplementary Medical Insurance Program).

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Dated: December 4, 2008.

Kerry Weems,
Acting Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

[FR Doc. E8-30001 Filed 12-18-08; 8:45 am]

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