

The National Association of Social Workers

750 First Street NE

Suite 700

Washington, DC 20002-4241

SocialWorkers.org



Mirean Coleman, MSW, LICSW, CT

Senior Practice Associate

mcoleman@naswdc.org

2011 Medicare Changes for Clinical Social Workers

Effective January 1, 2011, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the following Medicare policy changes that affect clinical social workers who are Medicare providers.

1. Outpatient Mental Health Services –

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPPA) eliminated co-payments for Medicare outpatient mental health services. By statute, Medicare requires 50 percent co-payment for outpatient mental health services, as compared to 20 percent for most other health services. MIPPA phases out the 50 percent co-payment beginning 2010 and expanding to 2014. For 2011, CMS will pay 55 percent of the approved amount of outpatient mental health services which is the same as for 2010.

2. Bonus Incentive Payment –

MIPPA provides an additional one percent Medicare bonus incentive payment for clinical social workers who use quality measures in 2011 through the

Medicare Physician Quality Reporting Systems, formerly known as the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI). Information on how to submit measures to receive this bonus is available online at www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri. For 2011, participation in the bonus incentive program is optional for clinical social workers.

3. Medicare Fee Changes –

There are two important changes:

- A. On June 1, 2010, Medicare providers received a 2.2 percent increase. The Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act of 2010 (MMEA) established a payment increase for 2011 of zero percent allowing the 2.2 percent increase given on June 1, 2010, to continue to the end of 2011. This 2.2 percent replaces the 2.5 percent pay reduction schedule to take place on January 1, 2011.
- B. Even though the Medicare payment increase is zero percent, the conversion factor for 2011 is changed in the Medicare formula for calculating payment in order to maintain budget neutrality. The

NASW is advocating on behalf of its members to seek Medicare electronic health incentives for clinical social workers who use electronics in their practice.



Medicare conversion factor is a scaling factor that converts the adjusted number of relative value units (RVUs) for each service in the Medicare payment schedule into a dollar payment amount. Work, practice expense and liability expenses of the relative value scale were reweighted changing the numerical value of the conversion factor based on geographic location. As a result, clinical social workers may see increases or decreases in fees.

4. Mental Health Add-On Payment –

Mental health services continue to be increased by five percent in 2011. MMEA extends the five percent increase in payments for mental health services through December 31, 2011 for clinical social workers.

5. Electronic Health Record Incentives –

For 2011, clinical social workers and other non-physician practitioners continue to be ineligible for electronic health record incentives. NASW is advocating on behalf of its members to seek Medicare electronic health incentives for clinical social workers who use electronics in their practice.

Resources

Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act (MMEA), 111th U.S.C. (2010). Available online at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr4994enr/pdf/BILLS-111hr4994enr.pdf

Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA), 110th U.S.C. (2008). Available online at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:h6331enr.txt.pdf

Center for Workforce Studies & Social Work Practice Recent Publications

Workforce Studies & Reports available at

Workforce.socialworkers.org/studies/other.asp

- *Criminal Justice Social Work: Adapting to New Challenges*
- *Child Welfare Social Workers' Attitudes Toward Mobile Technology Tools: Is There a Generation Gap?*
- *2009 Compensation & Benefits Study: Summary of Key Compensation Findings*

Social Work Practice Updates available at

SocialWorkers.org/practice/default.asp

- *2010 Medicare Changes for Clinical Social Workers*
- *A Shift in Approach: Addressing Bullying in Schools*
- *Biopsychosocial Challenges Related to Transitions of Care*
- *Clinical Social Workers Be Aware: The ICD-10-CM is Coming*
- *Delivering Culturally Appropriate Care for Older Adults*
- *Enrolling In Medicare as a Clinical Social Work Provider*
- *From Poverty to Child Welfare Involvement: The Critical Role of Housing in Family Stability*
- *MDS 3.0: Implications for Social Workers In Nursing Homes and Community-Based Settings*
- *Medicare-Mandated Reportable Changes for Clinical Social Workers in Solo or Group Practice*
- *Meeting the Challenge of Supervision in School Social Work*
- *Meeting the Needs of Immigrant Children and Youth In Child Welfare*
- *Part II: Advocating for Change in Home Health Care*
- *Pharmaceutical Industry Prescription Assistance Programs: Benefits and Challenges*
- *Results of Request for Compelling Evidence to Increase Psychotherapy CPT Codes*
- *Social Work and Transitions of Care*
- *Social Workers: A Bridge to Language Access Services*
- *The Childhood Obesity Epidemic: The Social Work Response*
- *The Economic Downturn: Implications for School Social Work*
- *Trends in Medication Adherence*
- *When A Clinical Social Worker in Solo or Group Practice Dies*
- *Women and Domestic Violence: Implications for Social Work Intervention*
- *Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: Supporting Their Transition into Adulthood*