



RheumWATCH

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PRACTICE MANAGEMENT NEWS

New Practice Management Publications Available Online!

The Committee on Rheumatologic Care is devoted to continuously providing the necessary resources to assist members in improving their practice. There are two new e-books now available online – “The Business Side of Rheumatology” and the “Rheumatology Coding Manual”.

The practical business manual for rheumatologists, fellows-in-training and practice administrators was designed to cover all areas of starting, selling, redesigning and managing a medical practice. This manual provides excellent information on the essential components of human resource management, financial management, marketing, managed care contracting and much more.

In addition to the business manual, CORC has worked tirelessly to update the online coding manual to help members and their staff on proper coding and documentation guidelines. The manual provides an overview of the codes most applicable to rheumatology practices as well as their effective and appropriate use. Keep in mind that the ACR coding manual is only a guide and should be used as an adjunct to the American Medical Association’s Current Procedural Terminology manual and the International Classification of Disease.

View the manuals online today at <http://www.rheumatology.org/practice>.

For additional information on the practice management manual, contact Laura Snapp at lsnapp@rheumatology.org and for the coding manual contact Melesia Tillman at mtillman@rheumatology.org.

Having Trouble with PECOS?

Last month, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services reported that there has been a couple of issues with provider enrollment and correspondence with the Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System.

One main problem was with the [Medicare Ordering and Referring File](#)- which contains the national provider identifiers and the legal names of all physicians in the Medicare system and has an enrollment record in PECOS. The glitch in this file accidentally excluded roughly 48,774 physicians who should have been included on the ordering and referring file list. CMS has corrected this issue and has posted the updated list of physicians in the ordering and referring file on the CMS website.

Another issue is email correspondence between CMS and providers. CMS identified this situation as impacting Web PECOS as well as other CMS applications from October 10-20, 2010. This issue has also been resolved.



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If you are experiencing any other specific issues with enrolling in PECOS, you should email your complaints to your CMS associate regional administrator for Financial Management and Fee for Service Operations. Below you will find the contact information for each region:

- Region 1, Boston- Thomas Grannemann: thomas.grannemann@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 2, New York- Peter Reisman: peter.reisman@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 3, Philadelphia- Charlotte Foster: charlotte.foster@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 4, Atlanta- Dale Kendrick: dale.kendrick@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 5, Chicago- Gregory Dill: gregory.dill@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 6, Dallas- Jimmy Sigmund: jimmy.sigmund@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 7, Kansas City, Mo- Lisa Goschen: lisa.goschen@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 8, Denver- Lisa Goschen: lisa.goschen@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 9, San Francisco- Eileen Turner: eileen.turner@cms.hhs.gov
- Region 10, Seattle- Mal White: mal.white@cms.hhs.gov

Also, the American Medical Association has a Medicare enrollment complaint form in which physicians can use to file PECOS complaints at:
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/399/medicare-complaint-form.pdf>.

The ACR is encouraging all members to check the updated Ordering and Referring file list to confirm that your name is on the PECOS list. All physicians and group practices will have to be enrolled in PECOS by January 3, 2011 to receive timely payments from Medicare.

Visit https://www.cms.gov/MedicareProviderSupEnroll/04_InternetbasedPECOS.asp - to enroll in PECOS or verify your enrollment. For additional information or questions, contact Laura Snapp at lsnapp@rheumatology.org.

ACR's Health Plan Complaint Form

In an effort to better assist the membership in addressing both individual and system wide insurance issues, The American College of Rheumatology provides a Health Plan Complaint form on their website. This method of collecting complaints data will enable the practice management staff and the Insurance Subcommittee to act quickly in advocating for interests on medical and administrative policies and programs. This data will help the College proactively identify trends in payer interaction with rheumatology practices and help address issues before they escalate. For more information on the ACR's Health Plan Complaint form and how to properly utilize it, visit our website at: <http://www.rheumatology.org/practice/office/insurance/index.asp>.

ACR to Comment on WellPoint's Hyaluronate Injection Draft Policy

This month, WellPoint requested that the American College of Rheumatology review and comment on their draft policy regarding intra-articular hyaluronan injections for osteoarthritis. The presented policy was sent to the ACR's insurance subcommittee for input. The College is still

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in the process of gathering ISC's comments and will send WellPoint a response within the next few weeks.

AMA's "Heal that Claim"™ Month

November is the American Medical Association's third annual "Heal that Claim"™ month. During this month, physicians are being encouraged to stand up against flawed and inefficient claims processing.

To ensure proper payments from insurers, physicians incur administrative costs of up to 14 percent of the revenue they earn. Therefore, the AMA's goal is to reduce the administrative costs of processing claims to as little as one percent, and allow physicians to focus on caring for patients, instead of battling health insurers over delayed, denied or shortchanged medical claims.

The AMA is also supplying physicians with tools to boost their efforts to review and appeal inaccurate claim payments. Please visit www.ama-assn.org/go/healththatclaim in order to access free claims processing resources or report unfair health insurer practices.

AMA's New Web-based Tool to Measure Patient Satisfaction

The American Medical Association and Press Ganey Associates, Inc. offers a web-based tool called RealTime, which collects and evaluates patient feedback and provides information to help physicians improve their practices and better meet the needs of their patients.

By providing patients with a proactive outlet for feedback on their office experiences in an electronic survey format, RealTime delivers instant information that practices can use to minimize wait times, develop better patient communication, enhance practices' appearances, and manage the courtesy and friendliness of their staff. RealTime produces survey reports and helps participating physicians identify drivers of satisfaction, analyze profiles of their most satisfied patients and create blinded comparisons to other physician practices.

Visit www.ama-assn.org/go/patientexperience to learn more or purchase RealTime for your practice, or contact Laura Snapp at lsnapp@rheumatology.org for additional questions.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ACR Continues Work to Reinstate Consultation Code; AMA Reaffirms its Commitment

The ACR continues to work with the AMA and a specialty society coalition to pursue all avenues to ensure CMS values the knowledge and expertise of specialists and subspecialists and these physicians are appropriately reimbursed for their specialized patient care.

Additionally, the 2010 Interim Meeting of the AMA House of Delegates met November 6-9 in San Diego, Calif. During the meeting, a resolution was adopted that reaffirms the AMA's commitment to reinstate consultation codes and strengthens AMA policy to actively seek legislation that would

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require CMS to restore and appropriately reimburse for the codes. The ACR was strongly supportive of this resolution and will actively engage the AMA in our efforts.

RheumPAC Raffle a Resounding Success

During the Annual Scientific Meeting in Atlanta, November 7-11, RheumPAC held the Second Annual RheumPAC raffle. Congratulations to our two winners: Bob Lloyd, M.D. of Chevy Chase, Md., the recipient of complimentary housing during the Annual Scientific Meeting in Chicago, Ill. and Jennifer May, M.D., of Rapid City, S.D., the winner of complimentary registration for the Annual Scientific Meeting in Chicago, Ill.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of ACR and ARHP members; RheumPAC raised over \$16,000!

To join RheumPAC and support the ACR's efforts in Washington, go to [RheumPAC](#) website.

The Effort to Fix SGR Picks Up Speed

During the Annual Scientific Meeting, the ACR collaborated with nine patient organizations to flood Capitol Hill with phone calls urging a fix to the SGR before November 30. The "I Need My Rheumatologist!" Call-in Day generated thousands of calls to Congress from the rheumatology community registering a 1000% - yes, one-thousand - spike on the AMA's Grassroots Hotline last week. The ACR wishes to thank the nine patient organizations and all of ACR and ARHP members, and patients who participated in this organized effort to ensure Medicare patients have access to their rheumatologist. Because of the overwhelming effort from the rheumatology community, our collaborative voice will not go unheard.

The battle continues this week with AMA's White Coat Wednesday. On November 17, physicians across the country will make similar calls to Congress, vocalizing the dire need to fix the SGR before November 30. It is essential to keep the momentum going to ensure a permanent fix to the SGR, as Congress reconvenes this week for the "lame-duck" legislative session. If Congress does not repeal the 23 percent cut to Medicare patients during this post-election session, access to affordable, quality care for Medicare beneficiaries may be compromised.

If you haven't contacted your lawmakers to voice how the 23 percent cut will affect you, now is the time. Contact Congress and urge them to pass, at a minimum, a 13-month extension prior to November 30. Use the AMA's toll-free grassroots hotline at (800) 833-6354 or [send an e-mail](#).

Medicare posters are still available. Please email ACR Advocacy at advocacy@rheumatology.org if you would like guidance on educating your patients on this important issue.

ACR Meets with CMS Administrator Donald Berwick, MD

Monday, November 15, ACR President David Borenstein, M.D., ACR Treasurer Audrey Uknis, M.D., and ACR Government Affairs Committee Chair Tim Laing, M.D., met with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Donald Berwick, M.D., to discuss various issues affecting rheumatology.

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Dr. Berwick, known for his work in the quality movement, expressed interest in the ACR's early initiatives to engage in quality efforts. The rheumatologist's role in the Patient Centered Medical Home and Accountable Care Organizations was discussed. In response, Dr. Berwick requested that the ACR remain actively engaged in continued PCMH and ACO discussions to ensure any concerns are addressed as the pilot programs are developed. Additionally, the ACR cited a number of patient scenarios, where an internist needed a specialist's expertise to appropriately diagnose and treat a patient highlighting the cost savings associated with early access to appropriate specialty care.

The ACR will maintain an open dialogue with Dr. Berwick and CMS to address a number of key areas impacting rheumatology.

RheumPAC Election Recap

The recent midterm election will bring significant changes to the 112th Congress. Republicans have gained control of the House of Representatives by adding 60 seats to their caucus and gained six seats in the Senate. However, Democrats did retain control of the Senate.

So how did the supporters of the rheumatology community fair in the election? RheumPAC supported 42 candidates in the 2010 election cycle and of those 42 candidates: 37 were victorious, 4 were defeated and 1 race is yet to be decided. That means that 90% of the candidates that RheumPAC supported will be sworn into the 112th Congress.

The College will continue to work with supporters of the rheumatology community to advance the ACR's legislative priorities and looks forward to educating the new U.S. House members and Senators in the 112th Congress on the importance of rheumatology.

RheumPAC provides the ACR opportunities to educate Congress on the value of the rheumatology subspecialty. To learn more about how RheumPAC is working for you in Washington, D.C., visit www.rheumatology.org/rheumpac or e-mail rheumpac@rheumatology.org.

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