



RheumWATCH

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Page 1

PM NEWS

[New York Success Story](#)

Page 2

[ASM Practice Management Sessions](#)

[Practice Management and Coding Kiosks at the Annual Meeting](#)

Page 3

[November is "Heal the Claims Month" - AMA offers New Claims Workflow Assistant](#)

[First Edition of Medicare Compliance Newsletter Released!](#)

Page 4

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

[ACR Committed to Reinstating Consultation Codes](#)

[U.S. House of Representatives Passes Arthritis Prevention Control and Cure Act; Senate Action Needed](#)

[ACR and other Medical Societies tell Congress to "Fix the SGR in Lame Duck"](#)

[FDA Announces Market Removal of Unapproved Colchicine; Only Colcris Remains](#)

[Rep. Phil Gingrey, MD to Headline Legislative Update at Annual Meeting](#)

Page 5

[RheumPAC: The ACR's Political Action Committee](#)

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT NEWS

New York Success Story

Congratulations to New York on their new bill!

The ACR was recently informed that Governor David Paterson signed into law bill S.5000-B/A.8278B – the bill prohibits insurance companies from establishing tier 4 or specialty tier drug pricing categories with higher co-payments.

The city of New York is the first state to successfully pass legislation on this important issue that will protect their patients. This bill will support the citizens of New York who have serious conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, hepatitis C, hemophilia, and certain types of cancer in order to help make these expensive drugs more affordable.

There were many advocacy groups and professional societies who supported this bill, such as, the New York State Rheumatology Society, seven lupus agencies, Scleroderma Foundation, Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation, Arthritis Foundation, National Multiple Sclerosis Society of New York, Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, National Psoriasis Foundation, American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association, and many others. All of these groups answered the call to action and wrote memos of support in order to ensure that this bill would be passed.

Kathleen Arntsen, President/CEO of the Lupus Foundation of Mid and Northern New York, Inc., was informed of this patient access issue in 2009. The information was disturbing and became the catalyst that drove Arntsen to contact Max Hamburger, MD, NYSRS president in regards to begin working on fixing this issue. Ms. Arntsen states that, "In NYS, patient advocacy groups work with professional societies to make sure all individuals have access to the best treatments; when an issue comes under anyone's radar we reach out to these grassroots network of advocates and collaborate on memos of support, e-advocacy alerts, letters and phone calls to find solutions."

The patient advocacy groups as well as the professional societies that helped fight to get this bill passed truly made a difference in New York. Regarding the efforts towards this new bill, Dr. Hamburger stated, "We are very happy that, at a time when the NY State legislature certainly has its attention focused on many issues as the midterm elections approach, that nonetheless, they and Governor Paterson saw the importance of this legislation for many of New York's citizens, and passed the legislation and signed it into law. The effect should be to minimize financial impediments to access to new and important innovations for the treatment of rheumatologic conditions."

The ACR would like to commend all the grassroots entities in the state of New York as well as the New York State Rheumatology Society for their hard work and efforts in getting this bill passed.



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To access the bill, visit:

http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=&bn=A08278%09%09&Summary=Y&Actions=Y&Votes=Y&Memo=Y&Text=Y

ASM Practice Management Sessions

Where will you be November 6th – 11th? Don't miss out on this year's ACR/ARHP Annual Scientific Meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia at the Georgia World Congress Center. The Committee on Rheumatologic Care has prepared various intensive and informative sessions for clinicians to attend during this year's annual meeting.

Below is an overview of a few sessions:

Recovery Audit Contractor vs. Comprehensive Error Rate Testing Audits – Do You Know the Difference?

On Tuesday, November 9th from 1:00 – 2:00 PM in room A402 hear director of CMS' Division of Recovery Audit Operations, Connie Leonard, and James Cope, MD one of the contractor medical directors for the Comprehensive Error Rate Testing program clear up some of the ambiguity surrounding Medicare claims denials and audits.

CORC Forum: Health Care Reform – Where Are We Heading?

The ACR is working to keep you informed and up-to-date on legislation that directly affects the field of rheumatology. Don't miss the CORC forum on Wednesday, November 10, 2010 from 9:30 - 11:00 AM in room A411 to hear how changes in health policy are going to affect rheumatologists and their patients. The ACR is excited to present experts in the fields of healthcare finance, delivery, and payment, J.B. Silvers, Ph.D. and John Freedman, MD, MBA – their goal is to shed light on the future of health care reform.

ICD-10 preparation – Developing a Blueprint for Implementation

Regional managing HIM director for Kaiser Foundation and Hospitals, Gloryanne Bryant, BS, RHIA, RHIT, CCS, CCDS will discuss strategies on implementing the new code set into your practice's claim reporting on Thursday, November 11th from 7:30-8:30 AM in room B406. Ms. Bryant will address the basic variances between ICD-9-CM and ICD-10 and identify where to locate the necessary resources and information that is important for physician practices to transition to ICD-10.

For a complete list of all the practice management sessions, pre-conference courses, Workshops and Meet the Professor sessions, visit [the Online Itinerary Builder](#) or contact Antanya Chung at achung@rheumatology.org for additional information or questions.

Practice Management and Coding Kiosks at the Annual Meeting

Visit the practice management and coding kiosk in the International Boulevard lobby – here you will be able to talk with the ACR certified coders and practice management staff face-to-face about your coding and practice questions. The kiosks will provide valuable tools and resources such as:



RheumWATCH

- E/M coding charts
- ACR's Health Plan Complaint Form
- PQRI information
- E/M audit guideline forms
- And More!

Also, test your coding knowledge – look for the coding quiz in the Daily News and stop by the coding kiosk for a chance to win one of the valuable prizes!

November is “Heal the Claims Month: - AMA offers New Claims Workflow Assistant

The American Medical Association has created a free online tool called the Claims Workflow Assistant for medical practices that submits claims electronically. This tool is designed to assist practices streamline the process of reviewing and appealing claims that have been inappropriately paid or denied.

Within the CWA system, physicians can now find out information concerning the denials on electronic remittance devices or ERAs that are received in the practice. This will allow practices to make a determination of the best steps to take in order to aid practices in the appeal process. This is done by recommending workflows for top denials and provides numerous template appeal letters that AMA members can easily modify.

Visit www.ama-assn.org/go/healthclaim to access the claims workflow assistant, template appeal letters, watch a free archived webinar on reviewing and appealing claims – this is your opportunity to pledge to do your part to heal the claims process by reviewing and appealing claims appropriately.

For additional information on the AMA's claims workflow assistant or other practice management issues, contact Laura Snapp at lsnapp@rheumatology.org.

First Edition of Medicare Compliance Newsletter Released!

The Medicare Learning Network just released the first edition of a newsletter entitled, **Medicare Quarterly Provider Compliance Newsletter**. This educational resource is designed to help physicians, suppliers, and other fee for service providers avoid making mistakes when working with the Medicare program. The newsletter will specifically focus on how to avoid common billing errors with Medicare.

To view the first edition of the newsletter, visit, http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MedQtrlyComp_Newsletter_ICN904943.pdf

The ACR will post the top issues from this newsletter in RheumWATCH quarterly, as well as on the state list serves as they are released by CMS.

RheumWATCH

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ACR Committed to Reinstating Consultation Codes

ACR in collaboration with the American Medical Association and other physician specialties worked with Senator Arlen Specter (D-Penn.) to develop a United States Senate sign-on letter that urges Health & Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to reinstate the consultation codes. ACR members were encouraged to contact their Senators to request sign-on to this letter. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) circulated a House sign-on letter supporting Senator Specter's letter to Secretary Sebelius. In addition, Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) and Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) sent a letter to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Donald Berwick, MD, also requesting reinstatement of consultation codes.

ACR will continue its efforts in the "lame duck" Congress to reinstate the codes through congressional pressure and a legislative "fix". [Urge your members of Congress to join the sign-on letter today.](#)

U.S. House of Representatives Passes Arthritis Prevention Control and Cure Act; Senate Action Needed

Although Congress has adjourned to return home for the election (campaign season), they are scheduled to return November 15 for a "Lame Duck" session to address a number of important policy issues, and possibly some public health bills. The ACR and Arthritis Foundation will continue to work with Senate sponsors and strong supporters of the Arthritis Act to pass this important legislation in the 111th Congress. [Encourage your Senators to support the Arthritis Act.](#)

ACR and other Medical Societies tell Congress to "Fix the SGR in Lame Duck"

On September 29, state and medical specialty societies sent a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives urging Congress to take action during the first week of the "Lame Duck" Congress to address the SGR prior to the November 30 deadline. The ACR Advocacy page includes a copy of [this letter](#) and other [ACR/Coalition Letters](#) that have been sent this year.

If you haven't weighed in with your members of Congress about 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.

FDA Announces Market Removal of Unapproved Colchicine; Only Colcrys Remains

Food & Drug Administration announced on October 1 that unapproved colchicine will be removed from the market. ACR President Stanley Cohen, MD, sent a [letter](#) via email to all ACR/ARHP members with an update on recent communications with FDA and news that another manufacturer has submitted a new drug application for colchicine for the chronic gout prophylaxis indication.

Rep. Phil Gingrey, MD to Headline Legislative Update at Annual Meeting

Congressman Phil Gingrey, MD (R-GA) will headline the Legislative Update Session on Monday, November 8 at the Annual Scientific Meeting in Atlanta. Rep. Gingrey will give an election recap and a congressional outlook for the Lame Duck session and the 112th Congress. Plan on attending



RheumWATCH

this session to find out how the changes in Congress will impact the Affordable Care Act, SGR, medical liability reform and other issues important to the physician community. Dr. Gingrey is a 4 term member of the House of Representatives, member of the House Energy & Commerce subcommittee on health and an OB-GYN. The session will be held from 4:30-5:30 pm in B313.

RheumPAC: The ACR's Political Action Committee

RheumPAC, the voluntary, non-partisan political action committee of the American College of Rheumatology, works to support and elect pro-rheumatology candidates.

RheumPAC Supports:

- Representative Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)
- Representative Charles Gonzalez (D-TX)
- Representative Sander Levin (D-MI)
- Representative Mike Rogers (R-MI)
- Representative Mike Ross (D-AR)
- Representative John Shimkus (R-IL)
- Representative Ed Whitfield (R-KY)

[Find out more information on these candidates](#) and others who have received RheumPAC support.

Who Do You Think RheumPAC Should Support?

ACR and ARHP members can recommend a candidate for RheumPAC support at www.rheumatology.org/advocacy.

[Top of RheumWATCH](#)



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