

NEWS BREAK

April 20, 2010

New Requirement for MBC Licensed Physicians Effective June 27th

The California Office of Administrative Law (OAL) recently approved regulations (Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1355.4) promulgated by the Medical Board of California (MBC) that would require physicians practicing in California to inform their patients that they are licensed by the Medical Board of California, and include the Board's contact information. The regulations will go into effect on June 27, 2010.

The signage information must read as follows.

NOTICE TO CONSUMERS
Medical doctors are licensed and regulated by the Medical Board of California
(800) 633-2322
www.mbc.ca.gov

Physicians may provide this notice by one of three methods:

- Prominently posting a sign in an area of their offices conspicuous to patients, in at least 48-point type in Arial font.
- Including the notice in a written statement, signed and dated by the patient or patient's representative, and kept in that patient's file, stating the patient understands the physician is licensed and regulated by the board.
- Including the notice in a statement on letterhead, discharge instructions, or other document given to a patient or the patient's representative, where the notice is placed immediately above the signature line for the patient in at least 14-point type.

CMA POSITION

CMA has opposed the physician signage regulations since they were initially introduced by the MBC in 2009. CMA submitted written comments opposing the regulations and organized oral testimony from physicians at the public hearing held in July 2009. In its opposition, CMA made it clear that physicians are supportive of patient access to information about a physician's education, training and other qualifications, as demonstrated by our sponsorship of AB 853 (Hayashi) which would require a health care professional to disclose information in various health care settings to help patients understand who will be helping them with their health care, such as information about their license, education, and recognized board certification. However, we opposed this regulation primarily because of the following:

- The proposed regulations are unnecessary because state law already requires physicians to post their medical license or wear a nametag indicating their licensing status.
- Requiring physicians to educate patients about the Medical Board's functions could reduce the already limited amount of time that physicians have to care for their patients.
- Ensuring full compliance with the proposed regulations could be administratively difficult, particularly for physicians that practice in large groups or hospitals and have no control over signage in public areas.

- Failure to comply with the proposed regulations constitute a new and unnecessary cause of action for discipline against physicians, which could have the effect of clogging the Medical Board's already overburdened enforcement activities.
- Increasing signage in physician offices or requiring the distribution of more paperwork may serve only to confuse and overload patients with information.

Unfortunately, the Medical Board voted to proceed with the regulations, stating that the benefit to patient safety and education outweighed any burden on physicians.

Are You Spending Too Much on Insurance?

In the current economic climate, spending more than you have to for health insurance doesn't make sense. As premiums continue to increase, discover some of the ways to help reduce the premium increases you are experiencing.

Consider some of the following strategies to reduce your health insurance expenses:

- Rate Adjustment Factor: For groups of 6–50 employees, insurers reduce the RAF for new groups.
- High Deductible Health Plans- Still a good choice but be careful to avoid the ones that pay 100% after satisfying the deductible. Renewal rates are much higher.
- Plan Design - Let employees choose the plans they want.
- Compare among health plans. Insurers' rate competitiveness varies by type of plan and area.
- Open a Health Savings Accounts and contribute up to \$3,050 for individuals and \$6,150 for families plus another \$1,000 if you are between the ages of 55 and 64.

Call Marsh at 800-842-3761 today and let them help you figure out which of these strategies works best for you. Why not use one of your member benefits?

Also, ask them about your workers' compensation insurance. Recently an MMCMS member saved over \$4,000 by going through Marsh!!!

Blue Shield to Publish the California Physician Performance Initiative (CPPI) Soon

Blue Shield is going to publish the California Physician Performance Initiative (CPPI) sometime in late May or early June 2010 despite the many concerns raised by CMA, MMCMS, and rank and file physicians. CMA has sent a letter to Blue Shield and the Pacific Business Group on Health (PBGH) indicating their withdrawal from the CPPI and requesting that Blue Shield, PBGH, and any other insurers refrain from mentioning or identifying CMA as a participant or supporter of the CPPI. CMA has also set up an internal team to begin implementing policies on these issues. CMA has communicated in the strongest terms possible that publication of the CPPI without addressing significant concerns they have raised forces them to explore and pursue all appropriate courses of action necessary to protect their physician members and their patients from publication of misleading rating information.

If you would like to see a copy of the letter CMA sent to Blue Shield please contact MMCMS.

Do You Need to Make a Change to Your Directory Listing?

If you need to make a change to your listing in the Merced-Mariposa County Medical Society Membership Directory, and you have not done so already, please forward your information to MMCMS on or before April 30, 2010. We are currently working on the 2010-2011 Directory and changes need to be in as soon as possible!

The 2010 Palmetto GBA Spring Tour Kicked Off April 16th

The 2010 Palmetto GBA J1 Spring Workshop Tour is coming soon to a location near you! The three-month training and education series kicked off on Friday, April 16.

Dates: Friday, April 16 thru Thursday, June 10

Registration Time: 8 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. unless otherwise noted

Workshop Session Time: 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. unless otherwise noted

Locations: J1 regional provider communities in California, Hawaii and Nevada

Cost: Free

During the tour, the Palmetto GBA J1 Provider Outreach and Education team will conduct half-day, in-person workshops in Jurisdiction 1's regional provider communities throughout California, Hawaii and Nevada. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to connect with your Medicare Contractor and increase your knowledge of key Medicare policies and tools. Each workshop will include topics such as provider enrollment and Internet-based PECOS, recent Medicare program updates, J1 top billing and claim submission errors, the Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) updates and much more.

Space is limited and different for each session, therefore, registration is on a first come, first served basis. To register or find out more about the workshops in your area, please log into your [Palmetto GBA Workshops database](#) account and register for the session you wish to attend.

Please note: Workshops in California and Nevada contain both Part A sessions and Part B sessions. The Part A session and the Part B session are held simultaneously in different conference rooms at the workshop facility. You may only register for either the Part A or the Part B session. The Part A sessions and the Part B sessions for Hawaii workshops will be held separately in different locations and on different dates.

Workshop registration closes one business day prior to the event.

