

NEWS BREAK

August 18, 2009

MMCMS' 2008 Annual Report is now available to members!!!

As per the MMCMS Bylaws that were passed by the General Membership on February 26, 2009, we have prepared an Annual Report for review by our membership. The Annual Report outlines the accomplishments that were made by MMCMS throughout the year, gives a financial report, lists member services that are available and much more!!! Contact MMCMS to have your copy mailed or e-mailed to you, phone: 209/723-2976; fax: 209/723-8371; or e-mail: chrisym@pacbell.net.

Blue Cross Updating Payment Policies

Physicians contracted with Anthem Blue Cross will soon receive a notice detailing upcoming changes to its reimbursement policies, effective January 1, 2010. Blue Cross has informed CMA that it will be also updating its fee schedule on January 1, and physicians will receive a notice of those changes at the end of August.

CMA reminds physicians to carefully review any proposed contract changes. Physicians do not have to accept bad contracts or contracts that are not mutually beneficial. You should also be aware that you have the right to terminate an agreement if any "material change" to the contract terms is not acceptable to your practice.

CMA is currently reviewing the new payment policies and will let you know if there are any onerous provisions. Physicians should also calculate the impact the payment policy changes will have on their practices. Although most of the changes will result in higher reimbursement for physicians, it appears that payment for some services will be cut.

Physicians should also be aware that Blue Cross is switching to a new claim editing software effective November 7. Because of this change, physicians may notice a difference in how certain codes and code pairs are adjudicated. Physicians will be able to prospectively and retrospectively screen claims via Blue Cross's "Clear Claim Connection" portal to determine if and how the claim auditing rules impact their claims.

For more information, visit Blue Cross's Provider Portal at <http://www.anthem.com/home-providers.html>. Questions about these new payment policies should be directed to Blue Cross Provider Relations at 800/677-6669.

Contact: CMA's Reimbursement Help Line, 888/401-5911 or awetzel@cmanet.org.

MMCMS Introduces Our New “Healthcare Reform” Webpage

For information from CMA, AMA and our local Congressmen regarding the ongoing Federal Healthcare Reform debate please visit our new “Healthcare Reform” webpage on our website www.mmcms.org. MMCMS will continue to keep you updated on the progression of Healthcare Reform throughout the Legislative process.

Blue Shield Fee Schedule Changes Take Effect October 1

Blue Shield of California recently notified physicians of changes to its standard physician fee schedule that will take effect October 1.

In a letter to physicians on August 1, Blue Shield notified physicians that it would be modifying payment levels for many CPT codes, some being increased and others decreased.

Physicians are urged to calculate the financial impact the fee schedule changes will have on their practices. (Use CMA’s financial impact worksheet, available at CMA’s members only website, <http://www.cmanet.org/member>)

The new rates are available at the Blue Shield website, <http://www.blueshieldca.com/provider>. If you do not have internet access, you can request the information by fax using the “provider allowance form” that was enclosed with the notice from Blue Shield.

CMA reminds physicians that they do not have to accept bad contacts or contracts that are not mutually beneficial. You should also be aware that you have the right to terminate an agreement if any “material change” to the contract terms is not acceptable to your practice.

If you do not agree with proposed changes, you can terminate the contract before the October 1 effective date. Letters of termination can be mailed to: Blue Shield of California, Attn: Senior VP Network Management, 6300 Canoga Ave, 12th Floor, Woodland Hills CA 91367.

If you have questions about the new fee schedule, call Blue Shield Provider Services Department at 800/258-3091.

Contact: CMA’s reimbursement help line, 888/401-5911 or awetzels@cmanet.org.

