

MAC Carrier suggested policy deciding not to cover IV Anti-emetics.

Oncologists,

One of the MAC carriers for Medicare, (Northeast, NGS) has elected to not cover IV anti-emetics. Their plan is to have patients fill an Rx for oral anti-emetics, which they can then take before coming to the office for IV chemotherapy.

This is very alarming, as we all know that patients lack the money to purchase the drugs under part D, or will forget, have anticipatory nausea, or otherwise not have proper emesis protection. Many of us remember the bad old days when we admitted patients for nausea and vomiting all the time, and patients discontinued therapy because of the side effects.

We have struggled to overcome the reputation of chemotherapy for nausea and vomiting. We all know that if the patient gets sick the first time, they get sick with every cycle.

This is unacceptable, and we need to proactively discuss with with our MAC medical directors. I attach the letters from other MACs. If everyone agrees, I will draft a letter to Drs Haley and Patterson requesting that we leave our current policy alone, and that for cancer chemotherapy, that the choice of anti-emetic drug and route of administration should be left to the oncologist, and that coverage should be available for all options.

Thanks

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Secretary, NMSCO