

Trailblazers CAC Meeting of Feb. 26, 2009

Brief Report

The NM CAC Advisory committee meeting was held on Feb. 26, 2009 at the NMMS offices. Dr. Charles Haley, the Trailblazer MAC medical director was there. The CAC meeting had very little that was specific to Hematology/Oncology, however there were a number of items of general interest.

- 1) Trailblazers will be holding a 2009 J4 Medicare tour at the Marriott Albuquerque Pyramid North Hotel on 5/20/09. Registration is between 7:30 and 8 AM, and educational workshops will be held from *8AM to 5:15 PM on topics such as electronic claims, notices of non-coverage, appeal process, direct data entry, local coverage determinations (LCDs), secondary payers, navigating the Trailblazer website, PQRI, etc. It is highly recommended that office staff involved in billing, and physicians who are new to Medicare, attend. Contact Carol Wortham at carol.wortham@trailblazerhealth.com.
- 2) In terms of the backlog of new physician applications for Medicare providers, Trailblazers started with a backlog of 18,000 applications which is now down to 11,000 applications. They have added additional staff including a NM Management office in Deming, NM, and outsourced scanning of documents to try to improve efficiency. CMS has a requirement for an application to be processed within 60 days once it is complete, however if there are items missing this will delay the process. Currently, Trailblazers is receiving about 400-500 applications/day. Also, there is a new on-line application process which can be accessed via the Trailblazer website. They are receiving about 100 applications/day via the Internet and hope that this method will streamline and speed up the process. One advantage of the Internet based processing is that it will not allow you to proceed with incomplete information so all items have to be filled out. There is a certification statement which will need to be printed out, signed and mailed in within 15 days as part of the application process.
- 3) The Trailblazer website (<http://www.trailblazerhealth.com/>) has a number of tools which can be accessed to assist office staff in submitting reimbursement claims. There is a Provider Problem-Solving Guide which can be accessed on the website by typing Problem Solving into the search engine. This also provides a list of managers who can be contacted for various problems.
- 4) The Trailblazer website also has computer based training for physicians to assist them in submitting more accurate E&M codes. Some of this material can be used for CME.
- 5) CMS has mostly completed the transition from state-centered multifunctional contractors to multiple single function contractors which cover multiple states.
The current state of affairs:
 - a. MACs - Trailblazers covers Medicare Part A/B for NM/CO/OK/TX – responsible for correct payment of Medicare claims
 - b. DMACs – covers durable medical equipment, home health and hospice services.

- c. RACs (Recovery Administration Contractors) Connolly Consulting is the contractor for the region including NM, they are rolling out in NM at present - responsible for recovery of incorrectly paid Medicare claims
- d. Fraud investigations are now done by ZPICs (Aone Program Integrity Contractors) – Health Integrity is the contractor for the region including NM. There was general agreement that these organizations for now will be concentrating on hospital based fraud rather than private offices since “that’s where the money is.” These have been divided up geographically to provide coverage of fraud “hot spots” – CA, NY, TX and FL
- e. Smaller roles are played by CERT (Comprehensive Error Rate) which does national audits of error rates. If contacted by CERT a non-reply is interpreted as an error so it is very important to reply to inquiries from that organization. QIO is responsible for quality control.
- f. This means that your office may be contacted by any of a number of different organizations associated with various functions of CMS.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lin, M.D.