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CMS Releases CY 2015 Proposed Rules for HOPPS & MPFS

On July 3, 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the Calendar Year (CY) 2015 proposed rules for the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (HOPPS) and the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS).

The HOPPS proposed rule would update Medicare payment policies and rates for hospital outpatients department and ASC services, and update and streamline programs that encourage high-quality care in these outpatient settings. CMS is proposing a policy finalized in the CY 2014 HOPPS final rule regarding comprehensive APCs, for which implementation was delayed until CY 2015. CMS is proposing refinements and updates to this policy to make a single payment for all related or adjunctive hospital services provided to a patient in the furnishing of certain primary procedures. For more information, please visit the HOPPS fact sheet.

The MPFS proposed rule would update payment policies and payment rates for physician services on or after January 1, 2015. This rule also proposes changes to several of the quality reporting initiatives that are associated with MPFS payments, including the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) and Medicare Electronic Health Record (EHR). For more information, please visit the MPFS fact sheet.

SNMMI will provide additional analysis in the coming weeks as we begin to craft our comment letters. Comments for the proposed rules must be submitted to CMS no later than 5 p.m. on September 2, 2014. Comments can be submitted electronically through http://www.regulations.gov or by mail to:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Attention: CMS-1612-P or CMS-1613-P
P.O. Box 8013
Baltimore, MD 21244-801

Please visit the SNMMI Coding Corner to view the updated payment rates for HOPPS & MPFS.

Scheduled NTP Shutdown Moved Up

Recently, NTP Radioisotopes experienced a minor operational incident at their manufacturing facility, and their Nuclear Regulator instructed them not to proceed with any operation until they had the opportunity to review the situation. Unfortunately, this led to supply shortages over the past two weeks that may have impacted SNMMI members.

In anticipation of the time it may take to obtain approval to resume operations, NTP moved up their scheduled two week maintenance period, which was originally scheduled
for the middle of August. NTP is hopeful that this will minimize the impact of the current situation in their processing plant. The shutdown will commence with immediate effect with a scheduled restart on August 1, 2015. NTP expects start-up approval to be given by this time and for a regular supply of product to begin on August 5. For more information, please find NTP’s memo concerning the shutdown here.

SNMMI Solicits Member Feedback Concerning Patient Release Criteria

The Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging is in the process of updating the brochure, "Guidelines for Patients Receiving Radioiodine I-131 Treatment" to address the information gap to patients on release criteria.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has found great variation in the information supplied to patients treated with I-131 and is reviewing its regulations regarding outpatient treatment of these patients. SNMMI is working with the NRC to harmonize the information provided to patients treated with I-131 and would like your help.

Specifically, SNMMI is soliciting member feedback concerning instructions for patient release after treatment. SNMMI is interested in learning how your hospital or facility’s criteria differ from the Society’s brochure. The current brochure provides information on radioiodine, how long radioiodine stays in the body, how patients can reduce radiation exposure to others, and other important information.

Technetium Tc99m Exametazime Injection (Ceretec Kit) Shortage

On July 14, 2014, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a shortage of Technetium Tc99m Exametazime Injection (Ceretec Kit) due to a delay in shipping of the drug. The Ceretec Kit packaged with methylene blue is currently unavailable and its estimated return to market is the week of August 4.

Technetium Tc99m exametazime scintigraphy (with or without methylene blue stabilization) may be useful as an adjunct in the detection of altered regional cerebral perfusion in stroke. The Ceretec product without the stabilizer, methylene blue, is currently available. For more information, please visit the FDA’s Drug Shortage website.

Congressman Gerry Connolly Recognizes SNMMI

On June 24, the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging received the "2014 Creating New Beginnings Award" for its donations and efforts to Shelter House, Inc. Shelter House, Inc. is a community-based, non-profit organization serving homeless families in the Northern Virginia community. Representative Gerry Connolly (VA-11) recognized both Shelter House and SNMMI by entering their names into the Congressional Record.

SNMMI Weighs In

SNMMI provides comments to government stakeholders on a multitude of issues. For more information, please visit the SNMMI website or contact the HPRA department directly.

- On July 10, 2014, SNMMI submitted its “Direct Supervision” comments to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regarding their final rule for “Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Regulatory Provisions to Promote Program Efficiency, Transparency, and Burden Reduction; Part II.”
- On June 5, 2014, SNMMI submitted comments to the House Energy and Commerce Committee regarding Chairman Upton’s new 21st Century Cures Initiative, which focuses on accelerating the pace of cures and medical breakthroughs in the United States.

Important Upcoming Events/Deadlines

- SNMMI’s Patient Advocacy Advisory Board (PAAB) will be holding their Capitol Hill lobbying day on Tuesday, September 30. If you are interested in joining our patient advocates, please contact patientinfo@snmmi.org.

Contact hpra@snmmi.org to be notified by email of future newsletters.