

January 10, 2011

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Coverage of Medicare Annual Wellness Visit Beginning 2011

Dear Medicare Healthcare Practitioner/Provider:

Presbyterian Health Plan and Presbyterian Insurance Company, Inc. (Presbyterian) are committed to ensuring that our practitioners and providers are kept apprised of changes that affect the way health care is administered.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), signed into law on March 23, 2010, implements provisions that provide Medicare coverage for personalized prevention plan services (i.e., an annual wellness visit) beginning January 1, 2011. This visit augments the benefit of the Initial Preventive Physical Examination (IPPE or Welcome to Medicare Exam) with an annual visit that allows the physician and beneficiary to develop a personalized prevention plan that considers not only the age-appropriate preventive services generally available to Medicare beneficiaries, but additional services that may be appropriate because of the patient's individual health status.

As a reminder, the IPPE (Welcome to Medicare Exam) is covered at zero cost sharing (no copayment or co-insurance to Medicare Beneficiaries).

Effective January 1, 2011, Medicare and Presbyterian will cover the new benefit, the Annual Wellness Visit, also at zero cost sharing (no copayment or co-insurance).

What does this mean to your office?

Medicare beneficiaries should not be charged a copayment or co-insurance for the Annual Wellness Visit.

Report one of the following newly established HCPCS codes that become effective January 1, 2011:

- G0438 – Annual wellness visit; includes a personalized prevention plan of service, first visit
- G0439 – Annual wellness visit; includes a personalized prevention plan of service, subsequent visit

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) does not pay for preventive medicine services billed under CPT codes 99381-99397.

The first annual wellness visit (G0438) is a once-in-a-lifetime benefit. Therefore, if a patient is seen for an annual wellness visit and then changes providers, the new provider must still use the subsequent visit code (G0439) for their initial annual wellness visit with the patient, even though they may end up providing all the elements required for a first visit.

HCPCS code G0439 must not be billed within 12 months of a previous billing of HCPCS code G0402 (Initial Preventive Physical Examination (IPPE)) for the same beneficiary.

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If a claim billed with HCPCS code G0438 or G0439 is submitted within the first 12 months after the effective date of the beneficiary's first Medicare Part B coverage, it will be denied because the beneficiary is eligible for the IPPE or "Welcome to Medicare" physical.

For additional details regarding the Annual Wellness Visit, please visit any of the following websites listed below:

Presbyterian's website (www.phs.org)

This link (<http://www.phs.org/PHS/healthplans/info/training/index.htm>) directs you to the PHP Provider Training Web page, where you can access:

- CMS Manual System, Pub 100-04 Medicare Claims Processing, Transmittal 2109
- MLN Matters® Number: MM7079 Revised

CMS website (www.cms.gov)

This link (<http://www.cms.gov/MLNMattersArticles/2010MMAN/list.asp#TopOfPage>) directs you to the MLN Matters Articles Web page.

Once on this particular CMS Web page, search these downloads:

- R2109CP (CMS Manual System, Pub 100-04 Medicare Claims Processing, Transmittal 2109)
- MM7079 (MLN Matters® Number: MM7079 Revised).

TrailBlazer Health Enterprises, LLC website (www.trailblazerhealth.com)

Once on this Web site, search for "Annual Wellness Visit" to return related materials.

For additional assistance or questions, please contact me or your Provider Services Coordinator. You can reach us Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. I can also be reached by e-mail at msanchez@phs.org.

As always, thank you for partnering with us to improve the health of the patients, members, and communities we serve.

Sincerely,



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