

# Health Care Reimbursement Updates

By Kathleen Wall, RD

## ***Updates to Medicare Diabetes – Related Covered Services for 2007***

Starting January 1, 2007, Medicare will provide more coverage for services that affect people with diabetes. Here are highlights of the changes effective this year:

- Medicare will increase payments to doctors for the most frequently billed face-to-face visits including instances where the doctor and patient discuss health and ways to improve health i.e. diabetes control and management. This could lead to more referrals for Diabetes Self Management Training (DSMT) and MNT.
- Medicare is expanding access to rural and underserved areas. DSMT and MNT will be covered services included in Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) benefits. For more information on FQHC's, please visit [www.cms.hhs.gov/center/fqhc.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/fqhc.asp).

## ***Update: Positive changes in Medicare Part B 2007 fee schedule***

The 2007 Medicare Part B physician fee schedule has been released by the CMS. As part of the fee schedule changes, CMS has adopted a new, more transparent methodology to calculate practice expense, one of the components that make up the total code's value. Medicare RD providers are paid from this schedule for the 2007 calendar year. RD's will see significant improvements that will translate to increased payment. Once the code changes are fully implemented in the year 2010, RD Medicare providers will see small to moderate increases in MNT payments. The fee schedule includes an across the board 5% reduction to account for the combined growth in volume and intensity of services paid under the physician fee schedule. In previous years, Congress has created legislation to avert Medicare fee schedule reductions, however it is uncertain if the 110th Congress will take action to offset the 5 percent cut. RD Medicare providers can check their Medicare carrier's Web page for 2007 payment rates. (Remember to calculate RD payment, RD's need to take 85% of the physician 'par' or participating fee schedule rate.)

## ***ADA February 8th Teleseminar: Billing opportunities for MNT Telehealth and MNT provided in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).***

Recent federal policy changes directly impact how and where registered dietitians can provide outpatient medical nutrition therapy (MNT) services. RD services that are covered under Medicare are now separately billable in federally qualified health centers, which can increase levels of reimbursement. Additionally, Medicare and other insurance plans will now reimburse individual MNT visits provided through virtual nutrition counseling, whether in outpatient, clinic, community or private practice settings. Learn the new guidelines and take advantage of new reimbursement opportunities for MNT!

Registration information is now posted on ADA's Web in the "Listen and Learn" section: [http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/education\\_10341\\_ENU\\_HTML.htm](http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/education_10341_ENU_HTML.htm)

**ADA March 17 Medicare MNT Workshop: Get more out of Medicare MNT and learn strategies to make your practice more successful. At the Chicago Westin Hotel**  
Designed for new and experienced Medicare providers, this workshop will expand your understanding and skills for compliance and efficient delivery of Medicare Part B MNT services.

***National Provider Numbers (NPI#'s) – Hurry the deadline is coming soon!***

Reimbursement opportunities are rapidly increasing for RD's and make certain you are ready to increase your opportunities! Every Registered Dietitian should obtain an NPI# number, whether you currently bill for your services or not - the application process is simple. The CMS (Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services) web site has the downloadable form 855I - Application for Individual Health Care Practitioners. If you work in a setting that bills Medicare, and you already have a Medicare Provider Number (UPIN#), you will need to fill out the form 855R - Application for the Reassignment of Medicare benefit. The NPI (National Provider Identifier) number will replace the UPIN number and each Registered Dietitian that obtains a NPI# keeps the same number throughout their career. So hurry – don't wait! The deadline for obtaining an NPI number is May 23,2007. All Providers who bill for their services will be required to use the NPI number & will no longer use any previous number for billing after the May 2007 deadline. As more RD's obtain their NPI number, it could assist in reimbursement for MNT and ultimately increase coverage for our services.

To obtain your NPI number, go to <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov> or call 800-465-3203 (toll free) or 800-692-2326 (TTY).