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COVID-19

Local Payer Updates

Update #5 from the NYS AAP - Chapter 2 & 3

PEDIATRIC COUNCIL

Your Pediatric Council addresses billing and payment issues with insurers. We strive to facilitate better working relationships between pediatricians and health insurance plans, and to improve quality of care for children.

Dear NYS AAP - Chapter 3 Member,

As we continue to deal with the effects of the National Health Emergency on our patients and our practices, it remains our goal to keep our members updated with information from the payers in our region.

Emblem Health has notified us that they will be REDUCING the frequency of PCMH bonus/P4P payments from quarterly to semi-annually, which is the exact opposite of helpful to practices facing financial struggles. We are in contact with NYS DFS about this and other matters, and will keep members apprised of any changes.

UHC has announced that they will pay telephone-only (audio calls without video) at the same rate as E/M visits with similar documentation. In the absence of a physical examination, HPI/PMFSH and MDM are controlling factors in determining appropriate coding, and documentation will be critical in the event of a future audit.

CMS has announced a number of changes to the 2020 RBRVS in a release dated May 1, available here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/zip/rvu20b-updated-05012020.zip> (Look for the Excel file PPRRVU20_APR). In sum, the RVU for telephone calls (99441-99443) have been increased to make them equal to E/M codes at levels 99212, 99213 and 99214, respectively, which is a huge increase. For those whose contracts with insurers are tied to current year RBRVS, this increase should carry through, and if it does not, you should appeal to the insurer. If your contracts are not tied to the current RBRVS, it is worth a try pointing out this change to the carrier. Chip Hart of PCC has a blog post discussing this and a few other changes at: <https://bit.ly/2yA1yfx>

While not a direct payer issue, we do want to **make parents feel safe when they are ready to return to office-based visits**. In terms of office practices as we begin to re-open our offices or expand our reduced hours back towards normal, Children's Healthcare Network in Atlanta surveyed parents about what they would want to see in their pediatrician's office to make them feel safer coming back into the office for visits. Masks topped the list, and the document also provides a number of useful suggestions for improving the patient safety experience. It is available here: <https://forum.pediatricsupport.com/uploads/short-url/7moP6R1643Jyggvw1r8ffj1C1N1.pdf>

And finally, a reminder that June 4th, 2020 is the last day for **Meaningful Use** attestation.

With our best wishes,

Jesse Hackell, MD, FAAP

runhack@aol.com

Co-Chair, NYS AAP - Chapter 2 & 3 Pediatric Council

Vice President, NYS AAP - Chapter 3

Steve Goldstein, MD, FAAP

SJG34@Cornell.edu

Co-Chair, NYS AAP - Chapter 2 & 3 Pediatric Council

Immediate Past President, NYS AAP - Chapter 2

Share Your Billing Guidance & Payment Issues

We are creating a spreadsheet listing specific coding and billing requirements by insurer for all the companies that cover children in NY State and adjacent to our borders. In addition, since many insurers are local, practices should consider constructing a spreadsheet of billing instructions for submitting telehealth claims, as many insurers have particular requirements for the claims.

PLEASE EMAIL US THE BILLING GUIDANCE YOU RECEIVE FROM INSURERS FOR TELEHEALTH AND COVID-19 RELATED ISSUES. We already have guidance from Emblem, United Health Care and Cigna.

In addition, please let us know if you are having payment issues, as we may be able to offer help.

Useful Info from the National AAP

There is a vast trove of useful information available from the National AAP. CEO Mark Del Monte shared information on many AAP initiatives in a recent email, available [here](#).

The Payer Advocacy Advisory Committee, chaired by Sue Kressly of PA, is dedicated to helping pediatricians address all manner of issues with insurance companies and other payers, including Medicaid. PAAC recently posted the following resources available through the National AAP:

- Payment Advocacy for Telehealth: https://downloads.aap.org/DOPA/Telehealth_2_rev.pdf
- State Notices about Telehealth in responses to COVID-19: <https://downloads.aap.org/DOCCSA/State-Telehealth-Notices.pdf>
- FAQs for Medicaid and CHIP responses to COVID-19: <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/covid-19-faqs.pdf>
- Coding and Billing for Non-direct care: <https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/COVID%202020.pdf>

The AAP Coding Hotline is available to answer coding questions via email at aapcodinghotline@aap.org. In addition, a recording of a webinar on Coding During the COVID-19 Pandemic is available for viewing [here](#).

The NYS AAP - CHAPTER 3 is YOUR Local AAP Chapter

The New York State American Academy of Pediatrics (NYS AAP) is comprised of three local AAP Chapters, Chapters 1, 2, and 3, who work together as a coalition.

Your Chapter, the NYS AAP - Chapter 3, has over 1,700 members in 8 counties: Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island, Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange and Dutchess.

To learn more about Chapter 3, please view our [Member Value Flyer](#), which describes the value of Chapter membership.

CONTACT US - (We'd love to hear from you!)

President: Lisa Handwerker, MD, FAAP lhandwerker@childrensaidsociety.org

Vice President: Jesse Hackell, MD, FAAP runhack@aol.com

Secretary: Melissa Grageda, MD, FAAP Melissa_Grageda@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Elaine Pereira, MD, FAAP ep2850@cumc.columbia.edu

Member-at-Large: Cristina Fernández, MD, MPH, FAAP crf2101@cumc.columbia.edu

Member-at-Large: Micah Resnick, MD, FAAP micahresnick@gmail.com

Executive Director: Jessica Geslani jgeslani@aap.org

Director of Policy, Advocacy & External Relations: Elie Ward, MSW eward@aap.net

New York State American Academy of Pediatrics (NYS AAP) - Chapter 3
516-326-0310 | [Follow us on Twitter](#) | www.ny3aap.org

