

MLN Matters Number: MM3449

Related Change Request (CR) #: 3449

Related CR Release Date: October 8, 2004

Effective Date: October 1, 2004

Related CR Transmittal #: R23BP

Implementation Date: October 4, 2004

Revised Requirements for Chiropractic Billing of Active/Corrective Treatment and Maintenance Therapy, Full Replacement of CR3063

Note: This article was revised to contain web addresses that conform to the new CMS web site and to show they are now MLN Matters articles. All other information remains the same. .

Provider Types Affected

Chiropractors

Provider Action Needed



STOP – Impact to You

Chiropractors have been submitting a very high rate of incorrect claims to Medicare. Medicare only pays for chiropractic services for active/corrective treatment (those using HCPCS codes 98940, 98941, or 98942). Claims for medically necessary services rendered on or after October 1, 2004 must contain the Acute Treatment (AT) modifier to reflect such services provided, or the claim will be denied.



CAUTION – What You Need to Know

This article completely replaces MM3063 on the same subject. On or after October 1, 2004, when you provide acute or chronic active/corrective treatment to Medicare patients, you must add the AT modifier to every claim that uses HCPCS codes 98940, 98941, or 98942. If you don't add this modifier, your care will be considered maintenance therapy and will be denied because maintenance chiropractic therapy is not considered medically reasonable or necessary under Medicare.



GO – What You Need to Do

Ensure that your billing staff is aware that they must apply the AT modifier to HCPCS codes 98940, 98941, or 98942 when your clinical documentation reflects that the care you provided to a Medicare patient consists of

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active/corrective treatment. Additionally, your billing staff should be aware of any local coverage determinations (LCDs) for these services in your area that might limit circumstances under which active/corrective chiropractic can be paid.

Background

The 2003 Improper Medicare FFS Payment report indicates that chiropractors have the highest provider Compliance Error Rate in Medicare, filing claims incorrectly almost one-third of the time. Chapter 15, Section 30.5 of the Medicare Benefits Policy Manual states that the Medicare program does not consider chiropractic maintenance therapy as medically reasonable or necessary, and is not payable under the Medicare program. So, for you to bill Medicare correctly, you need to indicate which of your claims are for active/corrective therapy and which are for maintenance therapy. A modifier (AT) already exists that can be used for this purpose.

Therefore, you **must** place an AT modifier on a claim when providing active/corrective treatment to treat acute or chronic subluxation. For services rendered on or after October 1, 2004, all of your claims for active/corrective therapy (HCPCS codes 98940, 98941, 98942) that do not contain the AT modifier will be denied. This is because, as mentioned above, services without this modifier will be considered maintenance therapy (services that seek to prevent disease, promote health, and prolong and enhance the quality of life; or maintain or prevent deterioration of a chronic condition) and are not considered medically reasonable or necessary under Medicare.

As always, your Medicare contractor may deny your claim, if appropriate, after medical review.

For services that are maintenance therapy, you may wish to obtain an Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN) from the beneficiary and also apply the GA modifier (to be used when you want to indicate that you expect that Medicare will deny a service as not reasonable and necessary and that you do have on file an ABN signed by the beneficiary) or the GZ modifier (to be used when you want to indicate that you expect that Medicare will deny an item or service as not reasonable and necessary and that you have not had an ABN signed by the beneficiary), as appropriate.

Important Dates to Know

Effective Date: October 1, 2004; Implementation Date: October 4, 2004.

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Related Instructions

The revisions to Chapter 15 of the Medicare Benefits Policy Manual are attached to the official instruction released to your carrier. That instruction may be found at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R23BP.pdf> on the CMS web site. Also, you may check any local medical review policies (LMRPs)/LCDs that may apply to you at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/search.asp> on the CMS web site.

For more information about the use of the ABN, consult the Internet-Only Manual (IOM), Pub. 100-04, Chapter 23, Section 20.9.1.1. You can access this manual at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Manuals/IOM/list.asp#TopOfPage> on the CMS web site.

Additional Information

If you have any questions, please contact your carrier at their toll free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip> on the CMS web site.

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