

Practice Perspectives

The National
Association of
Social Workers

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2014 Medicare Changes for Clinical Social Workers*

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the final rule for the 2014 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule on November 27, 2013. Implementation of the final rule is January 1, 2014. Highlights of the final rule for clinical social workers include the following:

- Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS):** Clinical social workers who successfully use the Physician Quality Reporting System in their clinical practice during 2014 will receive a 0.5 percent increase. Clinical social workers who do not use PQRS in 2014, will be subjected to a 2.0 percent penalty in 2016.
- Sustainable Growth Rate:** Under the 1997 Balanced Budget Act of the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) methodology, clinical social workers and other Medicare providers may expect a 23.7 percent reduction in fees. After combining budget neutrality adjustments, the net reduction in payment rates will be 20.1 percent. For the past decade, Congress has averted this reduction for Medicare providers. NASW encourages its members to contact their Congressmen and request them to override the required SGR reduction.
- Medicare Enrollment Validation:** Clinical social workers who enrolled with Medicare prior to March 25, 2011, must revalidate their enrollment information, but only after receiving notification from their Medicare Administration Contractor (MAC). During 2014-15, MACS will send revalidation notices on an intermittent, regular basis. The most efficient way for clinical social workers to submit revalidation information is through the Internet-based Provider Enrollment,

Chain and Ownership System (PECOS) at: <https://pecos.cms.hhs.gov/pecos/login.do>. PECOS allows clinical social workers to review information and update current information on file, sign electronically, and submit the revalidation online. Paper revalidations are accepted but take longer to process. **For clinical social workers, there are no fees associated with Medicare enrollment validation.** Clinical social workers who do not respond to revalidation requests may receive claim denials.

- Psychotherapy Fees:** Clinical social workers can expect an 8.0 percent increase in Medicare fees for the provision of psychotherapy services. This is the result of several years of advocacy by NASW for higher reimbursement rates for its members.
- Electronic Health Records:** Medicare provides electronic health record (EHR) incentives to eligible professionals who must begin using EHR in 2014. Eligible professionals for EHR incentives include physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and dentists, and excludes clinical social workers. Clinical social workers who are Medicare providers can continue to use electronic or paper records in 2014 and file claims by paper or electronically. However, clinical social workers who enroll in Medicare must submit an online application and submit the form CMS-588 to receive electronic payment of services.

Additional information about the final rule of the 2014 Physician Fee Schedule is available online at: www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2013-28696_PI.pdf

*Hyperlinks may change without notice.

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