



## DMEPOS Update

The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) sent the following information to the Tennessee Pharmacists Association today:

We wanted to provide you with an update on DMEPOS accreditation and the continued ability for pharmacies to bill for DMEPOS given the possible extension by Congress of the October 1, 2009 accreditation deadline. The extension would give pharmacies until January 1, 2010 to obtain accreditation, EXCEPT we believe that Congress will pass some form of DME accreditation modification for pharmacies before that time. That could obviate the need for pharmacies to meet the existing accreditation standards, which many pharmacies have found to be costly and burdensome.

The House has passed the deadline extension, but the Senate has not yet acted. They are likely to act next week. Because the extension is likely to pass next week, CMS has advised us that pharmacies, under certain circumstances, can continue to bill for DMEPOS. In this e-mail we want to try and describe the situation as we know it.

- Those pharmacies that have obtained accreditation and a surety bond, can continue to provide Medicare Part B drugs, vaccinations and DMEPOS.
- If a pharmacy has voluntarily terminated from the Medicare Part B program OR has “stepped down” on their 855S forms (that is, indicating that the pharmacy would be providing only Part B drugs BUT not DMEPOS) and the National Supplier Clearinghouse (NSC) has processed your application, then you are unable to bill for DMEPOS even if the extension passes next week. A pharmacy should receive a confirmation letter from NSC regarding their change in status. If your “stepped down” application has been processed, UNLESS you modify your 855S again to indicate that you are going to also be dispensing Medicare DMEPOS in addition to Part B drugs, you cannot provide DMEPOS even if the extension passed. Processing these applications could take some time, so you would be able to bill again for DMEPOS, but it may take several weeks for CMS/NSC to process the “step up” application.

- If you have “stepped down” and are waiting for accreditation, CMS has said that your billing privileges exist as of the date on the accreditation certificate.
- If a pharmacy has voluntarily terminated from Medicare Part B OR has “stepped down” on their 855S form and NSC HAS NOT processed your application, you can continue to bill for DMEPOS and Part B drugs. NSC will not process that application. The key is KNOWING whether the application has been processed. NCPA has secured a commitment from CMS that they will ask the NSC to NOT process and further pharmacy applications that request a “step” down or voluntarily termination from the program. Therefore, if you submitted either form within the last few days, it is not likely that it has been processed. If your application has not been processed, CMS has indicated that you can continue to bill for Part B drugs and DMEPOS – assuming you have a surety bond. If you WANT NSC to process the application to step down or voluntarily terminate, then CMS is going to ask pharmacies to send a letter to the NSC, asking that they process the application. Pharmacies can also call the NSC to see if their application has been processed, but it may take some time to get through given the number of calls going into the NSC.

AS ALWAYS, YOU MUST OBTAIN A SURETY BOND TO CONTINUE TO BILL MEDICARE PART B FOR EITHER DRUGS/VACCINATIONS OR DMEPOS!!! You only need a surety bond to bill for Medicare Part B drugs/vaccinations if you are not billing for DMEPOS. CMS has said that they will give SOME flexibility to pharmacies on getting the surety bonds in October – days, not weeks. So, get it in as soon as you can!!!

We are hopeful that the Senate will pass this extension next week. One caution – if the Senate does not for some reason pass the extension, then existing law remains. Pharmacies need to be accredited to sell DMEPOS. However, we are optimistic that it will pass. More on that as we know it.

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