



Medicare announces inflation adjustment for 2005.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (“CMS”) is required each year to review reimbursement rates. They have just announced that for services rendered in 2005, the Ambulance Fee Schedule will be increased by 3.3%.



Page, Wolfberg & Wirth: PWW - ‘The National EMS, Ambulance and Medical Transportation Industry Law Firm’. As you are aware, keeping up with all the issues which impact your EMS service is a full time job. While we attempt to keep you informed of current issues, PWW also has an outstanding online newsletter which is well worth receiving. Their schedule is similar to ours, sort of once a month, or whenever we get a chance to write something. As a firm dealing exclusively with EMS related issues, they have been able to provide excellent information. Best of all, the newsletter is FREE! Just go to their web site and sign-up.

pwwemslaw.com

Of course, there will be some advertising on the pages for their services and publications, but I can personally vouch for their value. We have purchased CDs, manuals and audio conferences from them and have always been very pleased with the content and quality.



Holiday Schedule: Our offices will be closed for Thanksgiving on November 25 & 26.



Reminder



Newsletter Online: In the future, we will begin publishing the newsletter online only. Check it out now on our web site:

www.SystemsDesignNW.com

Click on ‘Ambulance Billing Services’ in the left side column, then ‘Newsletters’ to get to the most current newsletter, as well as all back issues. If you would like to be notified when a new newsletter has been posted, send us your e-mail address and we will add

you to the list. Feel free to add multiple members of your staff so everyone can receive their own notification. Send an e-mail with ‘Newsletter’ in the subject line to:

RogerZ@SystemsDesignNW.com

Also: check out our smiling faces in the ‘Meet the Staff’ link!



Nursing Homes (NH), Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) and Hospice transports:

Nursing Homes, Skilled Nursing Facilities and Hospices are sometimes responsible for payment. Our billing staff has noticed a dramatic increase in Medicare denials for these types of transports. With Hospice the answer is simple - if the transport is related to the patient’s hospice diagnosis, the hospice needs to be billed. All of our account managers are working directly with your community hospices to get these transports paid. NH and SNF transports are more complicated. The NH and SNF are responsible for transports:

- From the facility to residence.
- To another SNF for an increased level of care.
- Speech, Physical or Occupational therapy.
- Tests, treatment or service usually available in SNF
- Non-emergent evaluations or treatments which do not result in admission.

You can, of course, continue to expect that Medicare will pay for all emergency transports, except those relating to a hospice condition. We can also bill Medicare for transports relating to acute services and testing such as CTs, MRIs, Dialysis and cardiac studies.

These rules are not new. What is new is the increased scrutiny and denial of these claims by Medicare. Many of our clients have contracts with their area nursing homes to provide these routine transports, usually at reduced rates. When contracting with your community nursing homes the facility may at least agree to be “payor of last resort” when all other billing attempts have been exhausted.

