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Executive Director
Update

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the NLPHO has continued working with payers and vendors to meet member needs. Recently, Louisiana Healthcare Connections, a Medicaid Managed Care Organization, partnered with the NLPHO to provide delegated credentialing and contracting services; so, watch for your **RED** envelope and OPT-IN through the NLPHO. I invite you to stay updated on payers and preferred vendors through our website and newsletters. Please share this information with your providers and staff! As always, we value your feedback and support.

Monica Pittman



E/M Office-Visit Changes for 2021

As of January 1, 2021, physicians and non-physicians will select an E/M code based on total time spent on the date of the encounter or medical decision making (MDM), whichever is most financially advantageous.

According to the American Medical Association (AMA), “The revised coding guidelines for outpatient evaluation and management (E/M) services represent the first major overhaul of E/M reporting in more than 25 years. These changes have “. . . **significant potential to give doctors more time to spend with patients** by freeing them from clinically irrelevant administrative burdens that led to time-wasting note bloat and box checking.” Remember that AMA and CMS have made changes to office or outpatient E/M codes (99201-99215); all other E/M services will remain unchanged.

The AMA recommends three activities that a practice can initiate to prepare for the January 1st changes, which include:

- **Identify a project lead** – someone who can educate staff, review internal policies and procedures, and monitor financial tracking.
- **Schedule team preparation time** – Schedule time for in-person meetings to review the changes and address questions that arise.
- **Update practice protocols** – Practices must update their procedures and protocols to be consistent with the new guidelines.

Practice Management Institute (PMI) is offering an ***E/M Code & Guideline Changes, Effective 2021*** course on November 17th or 19th. Call the NLPHO office at 318-387-7358 or email monica.pittman@fmlhs.org for details.



MIPS 2020 Countdown

CMS is NOT relaxing the MIPS program for the 2020 performance year; therefore, practices must fight to get over the 45-point threshold to avoid a negative 9% MIPS payment adjustment. The Promoting Interoperability and Improvement Activities categories have 90-day reporting periods, which means there is still time to work on these two categories. Some steps to take to improve your performance:

- Record every patient, every encounter, and every measure you can to increase data capture for your Quality category.
- Identify Improvement Activities (up to four) that make sense for your practice, and aggressively do these for the remainder of the year.
- Focus on the Promoting Interoperability category measures you can do easily.

Get outside consultation to help you finish strong and successfully report your MIPS data by **March 31, 2021.**

Preferred Vendor List & Updates



NLPHO has negotiated discounts with these preferred partners. Take advantage of our unique vendor relationships! Call the NLPHO office for details (318) 387-7358.

ACMI – Access Credit Management, Inc. – Accounts Receivable & Debt Recovery. ACMI purchased Searcy, Arkansas based Economic Recovery Consultants, Inc., during late 2019. The two companies are now called the “ACMI Group” and do business in eight states. ACMI’s CEO, Ed Vance, was also elected president of the American Collection Association - Arkansas Division.

LAMMICO – Medical Professional Liability Insurance. LAMMICO is the largest medical malpractice insurance company in Louisiana and the only “A” (Excellent) rated medical professional liability insurance carrier in Louisiana. If it is time to renew your professional liability insurance, please contact NLPHO. Providers may be eligible for additional discounts.

The File Depot – Document Lifecycle

Management. The File Depot offers document lifecycle management Depot offers document lifecycle management services for both paper and digital mediums, including organization, storage, digitization, and shredding.

Practice Management Institute (PMI) – Medical Office Management & Training. The PMI curriculum offers five opportunities for medical office professionals to earn certification in their area(s) of expertise: Certified Medical Coder (CMC)[®], Certified Medical Insurance Specialist (CMIS)[®], Certified Medical Office Manager (CMOM)[®], Certified Medical Compliance Officer (CMCO)[®], and Certified Medical Chart Auditor E/M (CMCA-E/M).

SURGE Soft Skills – Online Learning / Training. This HIPAA compliant online learning platform offers NLPHO members a 65% discount on all courses,

including the Annual Training Bundle of eight courses which sells for \$25 per person with the discount. The annual training bundle for healthcare, which includes the following eight courses.

Vault – Behavioral Health Electronic Screening.

Vault, a cloud-based, HIPAA compliant behavioral health screening tool, announced a collaboration and potential integration with MD Revolution, a chronic care management (CCM), remote monitoring (RPM), and annual wellness visit (AWV) company. MD Revolution will utilize the Vault screening tool for their CCM programs. CEO Jeff Bullard, MD said, “CMMI programs require behavioral health screening, and this integration project should allow the Vault report to be pushed into the practice’s EHR through MD Revolution’s platform.”

Compliance Focus

Compliance Plan Guidance for Individuals & Groups:

In 2010, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) required all providers to adopt a compliance plan as a condition of enrollment with Medicare and Medicaid.

7 Basic Components of Building an effective Compliance Program:

1. Conducting internal monitoring and auditing.
2. Implementing compliance and practice standards.
3. Designating a compliance office or contact(s) to monitor compliance.
4. Conducting appropriate training and education.

5. Responding appropriately to detected violations.

6. Developing open lines of communication.

7. Enforcing disciplinary standards through well-publicized guidelines.

OIG's compliance guidance acknowledges that patient care is and should be the priority of a provider practice. Also, acknowledges, that implementation of all components may not be feasible for all provider practices. The size and resources of the practice will determine the extent of implementation.

Implementation is the most important aspect of a Compliance Plan. If you are not adhering to the stated goals and objectives there is no purpose for the plan document. Remember, due to the changing nature of healthcare regulation, the compliance plan is a "work in progress."

Best practice is to monitor and update the compliance plan at least annually.

Resource and training tips

OIG.hhs.gov/compliance

Compliance Guidance:

<https://oig.hhs.gov/authorities/docs/physician.pdf>

Health Plan News



▪ Louisiana Healthcare Connection a Medicaid Managed Care Organization has delegated credentialing and contracting to NLPHO effective 12/01/2020.

▪ Aetna Office Updates September 2020: Changes to their National Precertification List (NPL) effective January 1, 2021.

Click on the link to review newsletter:

<https://www.aetna.com/content/dam/aetna/pdfs/olu/of/ficelink-updates-september-2020.olu.pdf>

Please Update The PHO!

If a new provider joins your practice, or if any change occurs such as tax identification number, physician billing address, phone #, fax, name/e-mail address of office manager and/or claims coordinator, please contact Jan Tidwell or call the NLPHO office at (318) 387-7358. Thank you!



Mental Health & COVID-19



Mental Health Resources:

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline:

1-800-950-NAMI

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-8255

According to an August 2020 article published by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), many adults are reporting mental health issues due to COVID-19 such as difficulty **sleeping (36%)** or **eating (32%)**, **increases in alcohol consumption or substance use (12%)**, and **worsening chronic conditions (12%)**, due to worry and stress. Other organizations reporting sharp increases include:

- The Disaster Distress Helpline saw an **890% spike in call volume** in April due to COVID-19.
- The Washington Post reported suspected **drug overdoses nationally jumped 18% in March, 29% in April, and 42% in May** according to data from ambulance teams, hospitals, and police.

The good news is NLPHO has an electronic behavioral health screening tool available from Vault, a preferred vendor, that can be utilized in office as well as virtually. It allows providers to easily screen for depression, anxiety, substance use, chronic pain, and other conditions and have instant results, diagnosis codes the patient meets medical necessity for, and other possible treatment recommendations.

For more information on NLPHO Preferred Partners or questions about contracting or credentialing, **call the NLPHO office at 318-387-7358 or email monica.pittman@fmolhs.org**. We are committed to helping you and your organization thrive.

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