



Affiliated Contractors (ACs) refers to Carriers, DMERCs, and FIs. More extensive information on acronyms can be found on the Centers for Medicare website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/acronyms/>

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New Schedule for Request and Receipt of Medical Record Documentation

As a reminder, on November 1, 2006, the CDC shall contact providers for medical record documentation according to the following schedule:

- Day 0: Call 1 and send letter 1 or fax 1
- Day 30: Call 2 and send letter 2 or fax 2
- Day 45: Call 3 and send letter 3 or fax 3
- Day 60: Send letter 4
- Day 76: Score claim as an error code 99 on the Claims Status Website

Privacy Concerns about Emails

Communication by email is essential for efficient and quick updating of provider information. When sending emails, we must all be aware of what type of information is protected by the Federal Regulations concerning the right to privacy of medical records (<http://www.hhs.gov/news/facts/privacy.htm>) and what information is acceptable.

Questions have come up recently about including provider numbers in emails. Some contractors felt this was part of the protected information. However, the Problem Resolution Office staff members researched this issue and confirmed that the provider numbers are public information and acceptable to use in emails. Some provider numbers can be found by doing a Google search. PRO staff members regularly use public information files to find or update pharmacy numbers. For example, searching at http://www.healthcarehiring.com/pharmacy_florida.php provides a list of pharmacies and includes the Medicare numbers. Even the CMS webpage lists provider numbers: for example:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicareApprovedFacilitie/VAD/itemdetail.asp?filterType=none&filterByDID=-99&sortByDID=1&sortOrder=ascending&itemID=CMS053703>

Clearly this is not protected information.

The information we need to protect is information specific to each patient. We can include the following: CID number, provider name and number, CCN number, provider address, phone number, fax number, Affiliated Contractor name and number. What we cannot include: patient name, HICNUM, DOB, DOS, and any info concerning patient diagnosis, condition, and treatment.

For further information, go to:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>

<http://www.hipaa.org/>

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HIPAAGenInfo/>

<http://www.hipaadvisory.com/>

The purpose of the CERT Newsletter is to provide for an exchange of information among the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the CERT Review Contractor (CRC), the CERT Documentation Contractor (CDC), Affiliated Contractors (ACs) and Providers. The Newsletter is not intended to set CMS policy or replace CMS directives. The newsletter is published monthly by CDC. Archived copies are available on the CERT Website: <http://www.certprovider.org>

Send in questions, suggestions, and/or articles for inclusion in the newsletter to marylou@certcdc.com

Deadline for November 2006 issue is 15 November.
