



PDPM Billing Changes Effective April 1, 2021

A change request was published by CMS on January 14, 2021 regarding claims for SNF residents who cut from Medicare Part A skilled care and are skilled under Medicare Part A again within 30 days. CMS has had issues since the implementation of PDPM resetting the Variable Per Diem (VPD) rate adjustment when a resident cuts from skilled care and is re-skilled within 30 days without a discharge and re-admission to the facility. CMS was only properly resetting the VPD when a new admission date was indicated on the claim.

This change request provides SNFs with another billing option to reset the VPD in these instances. The SNF can bill the non-covered days when the resident is on a lower level of care with a 76 occurrence span code (OSC). CMS will reset the VPD to Day One on the day after the through date of the 76 OSC when both the 76 OSC and a new 50 occurrence code are present on the claim. CMS has also updated section 40.3.2 of the Claims Processing Manual with this new information which can be [found here](#). More information regarding the official change request can be [found here](#).

Health and Human Services Extends Public Health Emergency

Effective April 21, 2021, the Public Health Emergency related to COVID-19 has been extended another 90 days with a new expiration date of July 20, 2021. The extension of the Public Health Emergency also extends the Qualifying Hospital Stay waiver and the 100-day benefit period waiver for another 90 days. The Declaration of the extension can be [found here](#).

Medicare 2% Sequestration Suspension Extended through December

Congress previously suspended the Medicare 2% sequestration as a part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. That was effective on May 1, 2020 and was set to expire on December 31, 2020. Congress recently passed the Act to Prevent Across-the-Board Direct Spending Cuts on April 14, 2021 and signed into law the suspension of the 2% sequestration through December 31, 2021. A special edition of the CMS MLN can be [read here](#).

CMS Expands Coverage for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Services through Telehealth

CMS has extended telehealth coverage for speech-language pathology and audiology services by adding an additional 24 CPT codes to the telehealth approved list. These services are available to be performed by telehealth for the remainder of the public health emergency. [Click here](#) for a complete listing of approved telehealth services.

Aetna, Cigna and Humana Lift NCCI Edits on Code Pairs

Aetna, Cigna and Humana have announced that they will follow CMS NCCI edit changes and allow certain CPT codes to be billed together that were previously restricted. CMS published a new NCCI edit file effective January 1, 2021 and made edit deletions retroactive to January 1, 2020. Read more information [here](#) regarding how these payers are approaching the reprocessing of claims. [Click here](#) to review the most recent NCCI edit file.

RKL is acutely aware of the serious strain the COVID-19 emergency has had on skilled nursing providers. Any providers who are experiencing difficulty navigating the ever-changing waivers, experiencing issues with cash flow or have questions regarding the clinical aspect of the COVID-19 emergency are encouraged to contact an RKL Senior Living Partner – [Stefanie Knaub](#), [Stephanie Kessler](#) or [Jeffrey Boland](#) – for assistance.

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