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COA Report

California Orthopaedic Association

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TOP NEWS

Health Net to delay implementation of reduced E&M reimbursement with modifier 25



Health Net has advised the California Medical Association (CMA) that it will delay implementation of its recently announced modifier 25 and emergency services payment policies for its Medicare and Medi-Cal lines of business until July 1, 2018, to allow time to review provider concerns over the new policies.

Health Net first [notified](#) physicians in March of the new payment policies set to go into effect on May 16, 2018. CMA, along with several specialty societies including the California Orthopaedic Association, raised significant concerns with Health Net about the proposed changes and urged that the policies be rescinded.

Following our discussion, Health Net verbally agreed to delay implementation, so it can further review the policies and continue the dialogue with providers about their concerns. Health Net will be sending out an official notice to physicians about the implementation delay.

The policies delayed until July 1 are:

- Reduce reimbursement of evaluation and management (E/M) services when billed with modifier 25 under the following circumstances:
- When a minor surgical procedure code is reported on the same day as an E/M code by the same physician, payment for the E/M code will be reduced by 50 percent.
- When a preventative/wellness exam and a problem-oriented E/M are billed during the same encounter, payment for the problem-oriented E/M code will be reduced by 50 percent.
- Reduce reimbursement for level 4 (CPT 99284) and level 5 (CPT 99285) emergency room services that are billed with what Health Net deems a non-emergent diagnosis to a level 3 (CPT 99283) contracted rate.

Health Net has advised that it will, however, proceed with the May 16 implementation of the policy to no longer recognize or reimburse for consultation codes (99241-99255). However, consultation codes billed will be cross-walked to the appropriate E/M level code for reimbursement.

Medicine appreciates Health Net's willingness to delay the implementation of the E&M reductions to allow more time to consider the concerns expressed by CMA, COA and CPMA.

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Covered California

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