

90.6 – Sources for Obtaining Information

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Generally, legislative changes to Medicare coverage rules are established by statute and implemented through notice-and-comment rulemaking. For example, if Medicare Part B coverage is affected, the changes are usually included in the annual Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) proposed and final rules, published in the Federal Register every summer and fall, respectively. These rules are codified in the Code of Federal Regulations. Medicare manual guidance corresponding to legislative changes in benefits may also be released in the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual (Pub. 100-02) and/or the Medicare Claims Processing Manual (Pub. 100-04).

Implementation of coverage changes resulting from the NCD process and all related changes to original Medicare claims processing are made through Change Requests (CRs) and Transmittals (TRs) that also are used to update the Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual (Pub. 100-03) and the Medicare Claims Processing Manual (Pub. 100-04).

Although MA plans have not been required to use original Medicare claims processing systems, MAOs must follow the coverage instructions in the original Medicare CRs/TRs. We also encourage plans to use claims processing guidance as a source of information that will support their implementation of the new benefit/service or other change in coverage.

The following Internet resources provide information on NCDs and LCDs:

The Medicare Coverage webpage located at:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/center/coverage.asp> has links that:

- Provide a listing of all NCDs;
- Provide a listing of all National Coverage Analyses (NCAs) and final Decision Memos;
- Provide an index of Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs);
- Enable users to subscribe to the CMS Coverage Listserv and receive weekly notifications when national coverage documents are updated, such as national coverage analyses (NCAs) and national coverage determinations (NCDs). Listserv subscribers also receive special updates, including CMS announcements of new topics opened for national decision, posting of decision memos, and posting of final technology assessment (TA) reports;
- Provide a list of all email coverage updates sorted by year; and
- Enable users to search the database.

Both pending and closed coverage determinations are listed. For each coverage topic CMS provides a staff name and e-mail link so that interested individuals can send questions and provide feedback.

The Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual, Publication 100-03, accessible at: <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Internet-Only-Manuals-IOMs.html>, includes the Medicare national coverage determinations.

Program Transmittals and Change Requests transmit CMS' new policies and procedures on new coverage determinations and Medicare benefits. Links to the Program Transmittals and Change Requests can be found at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/index.html>; and

Medicare Internet-Only Manuals, located at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Internet-Only-Manuals-IOMs.html>. These manuals, including the Benefit Policy Manual and Claims Processing Manuals, as described above, present information on Medicare coverage of items and services and claims processing. Changes to these manuals are released through Program Transmittals and Change Requests.