COMPLIANCE TIPS

Test Your Knowledge of New vs. Established Patient Visits

Dr. Mover is a family practice physician who saw patient John Snowbird on 05/02/2013 at his practice in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dr. Mover was a member of the Pittsburgh Primary Care Physicians group practice at that time.

Dr. Mover was sick and tired of the winters so he moved to Florida and on 07/01/2014 he became a member of the Jacksonville Family Physicians group practice.

Mr. Snowbird, who also grew tired of the seemingly unending winters up north, also moved to Jacksonville. A 06/03/15 appointment was scheduled for him with Dr. Shaker, a member of the Jacksonville Family Physicians group. Dr. Shaker is also a family practice physician.

Mr. Snowbird had not been seen by any of the providers in the Jacksonville Family Physicians group practice before his 06/03/15 appointment with Dr. Shaker.

Would Mr. Snowbird be considered a new or established patient to Dr. Shaker?

Why?

The answer will be published in the next issue of The Connector. If you cannot wait until then, you may find the answer published on the Compliance Website under Compliance Tips – New vs. Established Patient.

http://www.hscj.ufl.edu/college-of-medicine/compliance/Edu.aspx#tips

ANSWER: Mr. Snowbird would be considered a NEW patient to Dr. Shaker. Prior to his 06/03/15 appointment, Mr. Snowbird had not been seen by Dr. Shaker. Although Mr. Snowbird was seen by another physician of the exact same specialty and subspecialty (both Dr. Mover and Dr. Shaker are family practice physicians), Dr. Mover’s initial encounter with Mr. Snowbird would have been billed under the Pittsburgh Primary Care Physicians group number. Dr. Shaker’s initial encounter with Mr. Snowbird was billed under the Jacksonville Family Physicians group number. Since the patient was previously seen by another physician of the same exact specialty but in a different group practice, the initial encounter with Dr. Shaker of the Jacksonville Family Physicians group would be coded as a NEW patient office visit. Per CPT®, an established patient is one who has received professional services from the physician/qualified health care professional or another physician/qualified health care professional of the exact same specialty and subspecialty who belongs to the same group practice, within the past three years.

Another tip to consider is to be sure of the physician’s specialty. Simply because a physician is a member of a particular department, division, or clinic, do not assume that the physician’s
specialty coincides with the department, division or clinic. For example, a physician may be a member of the Community Health and Family Medicine Department which is composed mainly of family practice specialists or general practitioners; however, there are some physicians within that department who are internal medicine specialists and enrolled with third-party payers under that particular specialty.