

Accreditation for Service Suppliers

In late January, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the designation of 3 national organizations—the American College of Radiology, the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission, and The Joint Commission (TJC)—to accredit suppliers furnishing the technical component (TC) of advanced diagnostic imaging procedures. The accreditation requirement will apply only to the suppliers furnishing the imaging services, not to the physicians interpreting the images. As required by the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) of 2008, all suppliers of the TC of advanced imaging must become accredited by an organization designated by the secretary of Health and Human Services by January 1, 2012. The accreditation requirement applies to physicians, nonphysician practitioners, and physician and nonphysician organizations that are paid for providing the TC of advanced imaging services under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. MIPPA specifically defines advanced diagnostic imaging procedures as including diagnostic magnetic resonance, computed tomography, and nuclear medicine imaging, including PET. The details of the accreditation organization selection process went through notice and comment rulemaking in the calendar year 2010 Physician Fee Schedule rule.

The accrediting organizations had to demonstrate experience in advanced diagnostic imaging and that their accreditation requirements met or exceeded standards set out in MIPPA, including requirements for: qualifications of nonphysician personnel performing imaging; qualifications and responsibilities of medical directors and supervising physicians; procedures to ensure the safety of the individuals furnishing the imaging procedure and of the persons to whom the services are furnished; procedures to ensure reliability, clarity, and accuracy of the technical quality of diagnostic images produced by suppliers; procedures to assist the beneficiary in obtaining imaging records on request; and procedures to notify CMS of any changes to the imaging modalities subsequent to the accrediting organization's decision. In addition, accrediting organizations were required to develop a plan for reducing the burden and cost of accreditation to small and rural suppliers. The accrediting organizations are also required to provide CMS with information about their survey processes.

CMS will issue additional guidance to suppliers about meeting the accreditation requirements and plans to undertake a provider education outreach program to ensure that all affected suppliers understand the requirements. More information is available at the CMS Website at www.cms.hhs.gov/medicareprovidersupenroll.

MOLECULAR IMAGING UPDATE

Innovation Is Key to Building Membership

The Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE) Membership & Innovation Task Force has been charged with increasing membership in both SNM and the MICoE, with an emphasis on attracting new members from beyond the traditional nuclear medicine community. The task force has focused its efforts on 3 main areas: technical issues related to the membership categories, an examination of programs and benefits that might increase the appeal of membership, and marketing targeted toward achieving a membership that reflects the diversity of molecular imaging.

The task force, in conjunction with the SNM Membership Committee, developed a resolution to change the descriptions of membership categories to include both clinicians and researchers from all areas of molecular imaging. This resolution, now before the Bylaws Committee, also creates a new membership category for MI laboratory specialists working primarily in the preclinical arena. These researchers have been identified as an underserved population. Another proposal (approved by the SNM BOD at their September meeting) was to offer free membership to molecular imaging graduate students and postdoctoral trainees. This offer

parallels the free membership granted to residents. The SNM BOD also approved a limited-time discount of 50% on first-year dues and meeting registration fees for new members who belong to scientific societies in related fields.

Task force discussions about programs and benefits of membership focused first on examining current offerings. One conclusion was that many services, such as the MI Forums and monthly MI literature highlights, should be marketed more effectively. Also, the valuable work of other groups should be highlighted, such as the monthly webinars produced by the MI and PET centers of excellence and the SNM Clinical Trials Network. The most effective marketing effort thus far has been a special 50% new member discount for attendees of the 2009 World Molecular Imaging Congress (WMIC).



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