

Jesse, Susan J. (CMS)

From: Ferguson, Dale [DFerguson2@cms.hhs.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 09, 2004 8:53 AM
To: ketelsen@creighton.edu
Subject: Medicare patients seeing multiple providers on the same day

Ms. Ketelsen:

This is in reply to the following question:

"Can you please advise me of Medicare's policy of patients only seeing one provider per day? Does this only apply to Behavioral Health?"

Concurrent care exists when more than one physician renders services during a period of time. Medicare covers the reasonable and necessary services of physicians rendering concurrent care when each physician is required to play an active role in the patient's treatment. This occurs, for example, because of the existence of more than one medical condition requiring diverse specialized medical services.

In order to determine whether concurrent physicians' services are reasonable and necessary, the carrier must decide (1) whether the patient's condition warrants the services of more than one physician on an attending (rather than consultative) basis, and (2) whether the individual services provided by each physician are reasonable and necessary. In resolving the first question, the carrier considers the specialties of the physicians as well as the patient's diagnosis, as concurrent care is usually (though not always) initiated because of the existence of more than one medical condition requiring diverse specialized medical or surgical services. While the specialties of the physicians are an indication of the necessity for concurrent services, the patient's condition and the reasonableness and necessity of the services are considered. In addition, the services of one physician should not duplicate those provided by another.

This concurrent care policy applies to all Medicare services, including behavioral health.

In addition, there are some "bundling" and global surgery policies that address multiple physicians in the same group practice providing services.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

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