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Practice Highlight- *Maine Pediatric Specialty Group*

Maine Pediatric Specialty Group (MPSG) is a multi-specialty group consisting of eight different divisions located in 5 different sites in the Portland area. The group is also active in several outreach locations.

The divisions within the group consist of Gastroenterology, Pulmonary, Infectious Disease, Genetics, Endocrinology, Nephrology, Diabetes, and Developmental Behavioral Health. MPSG is dedicated to caring for the chronically ill child and in developing initiatives for increased quality of life.

MPSG has several ongoing specialty clinics in Cystic Fibrosis, Metabolic, Spina Bifida, and our Countdown to a Healthy ME. The Diabetes division recently received recognition for being one of two pediatric outpatient ADA sites in the Northeast. With continued growth, the hope is to soon expand to clinics in Urology/Nephrology and Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

Special quality initiatives being developed are pump recognition courses for diabetic patients, tobacco cessation for pulmonary patients, and a full laboratory and procedural follow-up system.

Payor Updates

Medicare Advantage Private-Fee-For-Service (PFFS) Plans

CMS has announced that in response to concerns about marketing practices, seven health care sponsors have signed an agreement to suspend voluntarily marketing of PFFS plans. This suspension for a given plan will be lifted only when CMS certifies that the plan has the systems and management controls in place to meet all of the conditions specified in the 2008 Call Letter and the May 25, 2007 guidance issues by CMS. The signatories include: United Healthcare, Humana, Wellcare, Universal American Financial Corporation (Pyramid), Coventry, Sterling, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee.

For more information regarding Medicare Advantage Plans being offered in Maine, you can go to our website at www.MPHO.org and click on the Provider Support tab. On the right, you can then click on Medicare Advantage Plans.

Anthem

On July 1, 2007, Anthem updated reimbursement based upon the standard conversion factor. The highlights are as follows:

- The maximum allowance for the following Evaluation and Management services will be increased by 3%: 99201-99215 and 99241-99245.
- For all other services for which Anthem uses the RBRVS as the basis for pricing, they will adopt both the 2007 CMS work adjuster and transitional practice RVUs.

Other specific details about the July 1st changes may be found in the Anthem Maine Network Update dated June 2007, pages 3 & 4. The Anthem Regional Meeting dates have been set for the Fall. Mark the date 7:30 am to 12 noon for the meeting near you (10/10 Augusta, 10/11 Portland, 10/18 Waterville, 10/30 WebCast).

Aetna

Effective May 1, 2007, MedSolutions assumed responsibility for pre-certification for all high tech outpatient diagnostic imaging procedures for all additional health benefits plans except indemnity Traditional Choice® plans. MedSolutions will now manage pre-certification for high-tech radiology for your Aetna patients with commercial and Medicare plans. Pre-certification will be required for the following: MRI/MRA, Nuclear Cardiology, PET Scan, and CT Scan. The following services will not be impacted by this relationship: Inpatient radiology services, Emergency Room radiology services, Outpatient radiology services other than MRI/MRA, CT Scan, PET Scan and Nuclear Cardiology.

Take Charge!™ at the Maine Heart Center program – Update

The Take Charge!™ Program at the Maine Heart Center is approaching its second anniversary in September of this year. The program's primary goals are to identify individuals at risk for cardiovascular disease and to encourage them to connect with their primary care physician for preventive care and appropriate risk factor management.

In collaboration with the original Take Charge! program at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, the program is available to businesses and community organizations in southern, central and western Maine. Since inception of Take Charge! , over 1500 people have been screened and, as a result, have gained valuable information about their risks for developing CVD and diabetes and steps they can take to reduce these risks.

What is Take Charge?

Take Charge! at the Maine Heart Center is a cardiovascular risk screening program that includes a cardiovascular health assessment, measurement of waist circumference and body mass index and biometric testing of total cholesterol, HDL, LDL and triglycerides and glucose. Following these assessments, a trained health counselor reviews results with participants, assesses risks, provides suggestions for improvement, and encourages participants to follow-up with their primary care physician. Participants are provided with a written report summarizing the results of the screening and, with the participant's consent, a one-page summary of the screening results is sent to their primary care physician.

Highlights of the second year of the program:

- With input from the MaineHealth Cardiovascular Health Workgroup, the program updated the Recommendation for Primary Care Physician Follow-up guidelines, which are used for the health counseling at the screening, as follows:
 - a.) The LDL Cholesterol section has been updated to reflect the changes outlined in the AHA/ACC Guidelines for Secondary Prevention for Patients with Coronary and Other Atherosclerotic Vascular Disease: May 2006 (Journal of American College of Cardiology, 2006; 47; 2130-2139). Also the LDL cholesterol goal for primary prevention (no CVD risk factors) has been increased from <100 mg/dL to <130 mg/dL. This brings the recommendation more in line with ATP III, however, it is still lower than the <160 that is currently indicated for people with 0-1 risk factors. It has been decided to maintain this in order to be sure that appropriate referrals are made.
 - b.) With regard to diabetes, the recommendations now include goals for cholesterol screening for people who have diabetes as outlined in the AHA/ACC Secondary Prevention Guidelines and American Diabetes Association Standards of Care 2006.

The primary care physician results letters which are sent following a screening have been updated to reflect these changes.

Also, as a result of another recommendation from the MaineHealth Cardiovascular Health Workgroup, the physician letters now list the goal for each screening metric to provide for consistency and easy reference.

- Take Charge! provided screenings at a number of local employers and also MaineHealth organizations in line with a two year plan to offer Take Charge! to all MaineHealth members. In May, the program provided a screening for the City of Portland's Minority Health Program's Somali /Sudanese Exercise for Health and Love event .
- The Maine Heart Center continues ongoing marketing efforts of the program to local employers.

If you are interested in more information about Take Charge! at the Maine Heart Center please contact Lorraine Talbot at the Maine Heart Center (talbol@mmc.org; 756-6025).

Tiered Networks

As healthcare costs continue to rise, the employer community is seeking products that engage consumers to become better informed about the importance of quality and costs in choosing providers. Many healthcare plans now include co-insurance and/or deductibles so that consumers are responsible for a greater portion of the health dollar. In some cases, payors are also providing data to consumers and offering incentives to steer them to high quality and/or lower cost providers. Employers are requesting demonstrable value, defined as high quality healthcare delivered more cost effectively.

In response, many of our local payors have introduced tiered specialty networks. In most cases, information is posted in the public website. We encourage you to research the status of your practice with each of these networks. If your practice is not in the first or preferred tier, the payor will be able to provide you information regarding the basis of their decision. Website links are provided below:

Aetna: Aexcel <http://www.aetna.com/docfind/>

Anthem: Value Network

At this time, Anthem is not publishing information regarding tiered network status on their website. To find out the status of your practice, contact your local Anthem Provider Representative.

CIGNA: CIGNA Care Network <http://www.cigna.com/>

Hannaford: Providers of Distinction <http://www.aetna.com/docfind/custom/hannaford/>

Healthy Choices for ME helps older adults take control of their health

Maine's Office of Elder Services is working in collaboration with MaineHealth Elder Care Services, the area agencies on aging and other community partners under the Healthy Choices for ME program to advance evidence-based prevention and wellness programs in Maine. *Healthy Choices for ME* is comprised of the following programs which empower older adults to take more control of their own health through lifestyle and behavioral changes. These programs have been shown to be effective in reducing hospitalizations, health care utilization and falls:

The **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, or Living Well**, is a workshop given two and a half hours, once a week, for six weeks. People with different chronic health problems attend together. Program participants demonstrate significant improvements in exercise, cognitive symptom management, communication with physicians, self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, disability, and social/role activities limitations.

A Matter of Balance/Volunteer Lay Leader (MOB/VLL) program, specifically designed to reduce fear of falling, stop the fear of falling cycle, and improve activity levels among community-dwelling older adults. Participants have found significant improvement regarding their level of falls management; falls control; level of exercise; and social limitations with regard to concern about falling. MOB/VLL has received national awards from the American Society on Aging and National Association of Area Agencies on Aging for innovation and quality in aging programs.

EnhanceWellness is an effective, participant driven, health promotion and management program that helps older adults with chronic conditions achieve their personal health goals through health action plans, and has demonstrated significant results in the utilization of health care services.

EnhanceFitness is a low-cost exercise program, taught by certified fitness instructors, for seniors with a wide range of physical abilities. The classes include strength training with wrist and ankle weights, as well as aerobics, stretching, and balancing exercises. Studies have shown a marked improvement in participants' physical and social functioning, as well as a decline in areas such as pain, fatigue, and depression.

For more information about the *Healthy Choices for ME* programs and offerings in your community, please contact Linda Samia, Program Manager, at 775-1095 or samial@mmc.org.

Pathways to Excellence Specialty Efforts

The Maine Health Management Coalition (MHMC) is a unique statewide collaboration of providers, employers, and insurers all working together to improve health care. Primary Care Physicians have been engaged with the MHMC's Pathways to Excellence (PTE) initiative for the last four years. The MHMC is now developing a comparable specialty program.

Maine Health Management Coalition members are seeking reasonable costs for health care. In response, the MHMC has formed a PTE Specialty Steering Committee. The committee is addressing both sides of the value equation: quality and cost. On the quality side, the committee is working with specialists to identify quality indicators that could be the basis of a Specialty quality program. Initially, the focus is on six specialties: Cardiology, Cardio-thoracic Surgery, Orthopedics, Gastroenterology, Neurosurgery, and General Surgery. Health systems throughout the state are taking the lead in one specialty, convening a statewide group that will identify quality measures. On the cost side, there is an effort underway to review the value of utilizing Episode Treatment Groups (ETGs) to assess resource utilization/cost data as a performance improvement tool. ETGs are diagnosis groupings of claims data. Many of the payers use ETG analysis as the basis for inclusion in their tiered specialty networks.

The Maine PHO and five other provider health systems (Maine Health Alliance, Eastern Maine Health, NovaHealth, Central Western Maine PHO, and Martin's Point) have purchased a one year license for an ETG analytical product, ProfSoft. ProfSoft contains claims data for all MHMC employer groups and all Anthem business representing approximately 350,000 patients.

The six organizations will make a recommendation to the MHMC in September as to the value of the tool. Currently, the PHO is meeting with specialist representatives to review the data and determine whether there is value in utilizing ProfSoft as a tool for evaluation of specialty care.

Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) Update

In an effort to get physicians prepared for reporting quality measures to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS), the MMC PHO extended an invitation in May '07 to all physician members for a pilot opportunity to earn additional incentives on top of the 1.5% incentive CMS is offering for participation. We had nine groups submit applications for the pilot: *Cardiovascular Consultants of Maine, Casco Bay Gastroenterology/Casco Bay Endoscopy, Falmouth Orthopedic Center, Maine Medical Partners, Maine Orthopaedic Center, Midcoast General Surgery, Miles Medical Group and Portland Gastroenterology Center*. These groups were required to submit at least four measures which they will be reporting on for at least 80% of their patient population. They will be required to submit a report in September to the MMC PHO explaining the steps they took to implement a system for responding to the PQRI reporting requirements. The top five reports will be provided with a financial incentive and these reports will be used in helping to train other practices at the end of this year for preparation of reporting to CMS in 2008. This program is currently only voluntary but we want to be sure our practices are prepared if Congress decides to make quality reporting mandatory or it is tied to Pay for Performance. CMS has developed lots of resources for practices to use. If you are interested in learning more about this program in preparation for next year, go to the following website: www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI.

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National Provider Identifier (NPI)

The NPI is here. Get it, Use it, Share it. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will be disseminating provider information contained in the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) that is required to be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), in accordance with the NPPES Data Dissemination Notice that was published in the Federal Register. NPPES FOIA – disclosable data will be made available in an initial file that can be downloaded from the Internet, as well as in a query-only database known as the NPI Registry. There will be monthly update files that will also be downloadable from the Internet. CMS will begin disseminating data on August 1, 2007.

CMS has made available a document that will assist providers in making updates, changes, and deletions to the FOIA-disclosable NPPES provider data. The document is entitled, “National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) Data Elements – Data Dissemination – Information to Providers” available at:

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/Downloads/NPPES_FOIA_Data%20Elements_062007.pdf on the NPI website. CMS strongly recommends that providers read this document as soon as possible.