
Program Memorandum Carriers

Department of Health &
Human Services (DHHS)
Centers for Medicare &
Medicaid Services (CMS)

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CHANGE REQUEST 2698

SUBJECT: Bi-Annual Updates to the Health Care Provider Taxonomy Code (HPTC)

The Provider Taxonomy code set is an external non-medical data code set designed for use in classifying health care providers according to provider type or practitioner specialty in an electronic environment, specifically within the American National Standards Institute Accredited Standards Committee Insurance Subcommittee health care transactions. The HPTC's are scheduled for update twice per year (tentatively April and October). The HPTC code list is available from the Washington Publishing Company <http://www.wpc-edi.com/codes/> in two forms. The first form is a free PDF download which is Version 3.0.1. The second form, Version 3.0, which is an electronic representation of the list, may be purchased from WPC on a subscription basis. The electronic representation will facilitate the automatic loading of the code set.

On February 6, 2003, the HPTC code set maintainer, the National Uniform Claim Committee (NUCC), announced that the HPTC code set had been updated and that the new Version 3.0 was effective April 1, 2003. However, it was discovered that there were differences between the electronic representation and the free PDF version. Those differences have been corrected and on April 4, 2003, the NUCC published a press release announcing that the issues had been resolved.

The updated HPTC code list contains codes that have been revised significantly from their previous HPTC code. In order to facilitate your update process, the NUCC has created a cross-reference tool to aid those that need to associate the old HPTC code with a new HPTC code. The crosswalk document can be downloaded from the Provider Taxonomy listing page at the site <http://www.wpc-edi.com/codes/>. The following is the summary of the HPTC changes:

Physician Codes:

All physician code numbers have changed due to the following change in Physician code structure:

Level I - Provider title "Physicians" has been replaced with the title "Allopathic & Osteopathic Physicians".

Level II - Classification of "Allopathic & Osteopathic Physicians" has been removed.

Level II Classifications and Level III Specializations have been reassigned according to the methodology described above.

Other Code Changes:

Some Provider Taxonomy code numbers outside of the physician provider type were also revised. Please refer to the full Version 3.0 of the listing and crosswalk for specific changes.

Instructions to Carriers

The carrier shared system maintainers were previously instructed to create contractor-controlled taxonomy tables, which would be used to edit the inbound HPTC for validity. Contractor-controlled tables allow contractors to easily maintain and quickly update the HPTC editing tables. The ViPS Medicare System (VMS) users were scheduled to receive these contractor-controlled tables in their April 2003 systems release. The Multi-Carrier System (MCS) users already have contractor-

controlled SPITAB tables. With the release of the updated HPTC list, contractors are instructed to update their HPTC tables if they have not already done so. Contractors must use the most cost effective means to obtain the list for validation programming and updating purposes.

On April 4, 2003, CMS released a joint signature memorandum (JSM) instructing all carriers to temporarily suspend the implementation of the April 2003 taxonomy editing described above. Contractors were also instructed to educate their trading partners and vendors regarding the proper use of taxonomy codes and notify them of the future editing and rejecting of invalid taxonomy codes. That direction was provided for two reasons:

- 1) The amount of claims impacted by this new edit was higher than initially estimated; and
- 2) The code set released by the Washington Publishing Company had inconsistencies.

In order to minimize the impact of this new edit and to properly follow guidelines on notification to trading partners, contractors are required to provide no more than 60 days notice to their trading partners and vendors of the release of the updated version of the HPTC code set and the planned editing of the inbound HPTCs. The 60-day notification period commenced after the release of the JSM on April 4, 2003. During this notification period, contractors are to provide education in the form of direct phone calls, bulletin board broadcast messages, direct mailings, or other methods that would be deemed more effective. All inbound taxonomy code edits are to be turned back on June 16, 2003.

The *effective date* for this Program Memorandum (PM) is April 1, 2003.

The *implementation date* for this PM is June 16, 2003.

These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget.

This PM may be discarded after January 1, 2004.

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