

Billing Education Article By Dr. Rhonda Church

MSI – WE’RE HERE TO HELP

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A large part of MSI’s role is answering questions from physicians and their billing clerks about the correct submission of claims.

These queries are answered by MSI Assessment staff, with input from one of MSI’s medical consultants, if necessary. Assessment staff can be reached at (902) 496-7011, toll-free at 1-866-553-0585 or via email: MSI_Assessment@Medavie.Bluecross.ca

MSI answers questions based on the existing fee schedule and Preamble. MSI doesn’t make changes to the Preamble or existing policies, nor does it develop new health service codes. In instances in which physicians want to explore such changes, other organizations or committees may need to be contacted.

Some recent queries that illustrate such instances include:

1. **Our local diabetes education centre is run by diabetes educators who are nurses and I’m a specialist in the community. I understand that I can’t claim a consultation in these circumstances. How do I get approval for this?**

Preamble rules stipulate that a consultation may be claimed if there has been a referral from the patient’s physician, nurse practitioner, midwife, optometrist or dentist. Therefore, you may claim a consultation if the nurse is a nurse practitioner. Otherwise, claim the appropriate visit fee. Changes to the Preamble are made through negotiation between Doctors Nova Scotia and the Department of Health and Wellness. Doctors Nova Scotia is your point of contact if you want to explore this. (More information is on doctorsNS.com in the Compensation > New fees/adjustments section.)

2. **I’m considering undergoing training for a new procedure that I can’t find in the fee schedule. How should I proceed?**

Fees for new procedures are determined by the Fee Schedule Advisory Committee, a joint committee with representation from Doctors Nova Scotia and the Department of Health and Wellness. Doctors Nova Scotia staff can discuss the process for applying for a new health service code. MSI isn’t represented on this committee. Once the health service code and its associated tariff are approved, the information is published in an MSI Bulletin. (Again, more information is on doctorsNS.com in the Compensation > New fees/adjustments section.)

3. **I order injections that are given on an outpatient basis by nurses at the hospital. Can I claim an injection fee?**

Under these circumstances, you may claim an injection fee only if you personally administer the injection. Payment for administering the injections is through the nurse’s salary which is paid by the district health authority/IWK. They can’t be additionally claimed by the physician.

4. I would like to claim for some medical services provided via Skype. A nurse will conduct the assessment of the patient and I will supervise via Skype. How do I claim for these?

Physicians can't claim for visits conducted by nurses. The physician must personally meet Preamble visit requirements including an in-person assessment of the patient. You can't claim for services rendered via Skype or similar modalities. However, some consultation services may be claimed if the provincial Telehealth network – located at various hospitals – is used. Preamble requirements for consultations must be met.

It's in the best interests of physicians to inquire about whether and how a new-to-you service may be claimed prior to starting to bill for it. As always, MSI welcome inquiries.

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MEDAVIE BLUE CROSS/MSI Medavie Blue Cross is the private company currently contracted by the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) to administer the Medical Services Insurance (MSI) program for the government. The responsibilities of Medavie/MSI include Implementing and managing the physician fee schedule, issuing fee-for-service and contract payments to physicians, and conducting compliance reviews (audits) to ensure the negotiated billing rules are followed. It's not the role of Medavie/MSI to approve fees, change payment rates or set policy. Medavie/MSI acts only as directed by the DHW.