

## Billing Education Article By Dr. Rhonda Church

### PHYSICIAN'S MANUAL UNDERGOES UPDATE AS RESULT OF FEE SCHEDULE REWRITE PROJECT

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The newly updated MSI Physician's Manual is expected to be ready for release in July.

While MSI and the Department of Health and Wellness regularly update the manual as new health service codes and policy decisions are implemented, the 2014 manual update is a key deliverable in the Nova Scotia Physician's Manual Modernization Project (PMMP).

The most significant change physicians and their billing clerks will notice is that the new manual merges the content of the previous Physician's Manual and the Billing Instructions Manual. This means the technical aspects of claims submission – such as how to correctly use multiples for some services – are now contained within the Physician's Manual.

During a series of billing education seminars hosted by Doctors Nova Scotia and MSI earlier this year, there was positive feedback on the concept of the merged document, particularly from the billing clerks in attendance.

#### Policy changes

The process of merging the Physician's Manual and the Billing Instructions Manual included only policy changes that were previously and mutually agreed upon as a result of decisions made outside of the PMMP.

#### Physician's Manual changes

Other changes that have been made to the new version of the Physician's Manual are as follows:

- **Improved readability**  
Some sections have been reorganized to improve the flow and readability of the document. For example, the previous miscellaneous section has been removed and each item contained within that section redeployed to the relevant section of the document.
- **Updated look**  
The document has an updated look and a number of formatting changes designed to enhance readability.
- **Linked table of contents**  
The table of contents contains links to the relevant sections in the document.
- **Updated index**  
The index has been updated so that items are now listed both alphabetically and numerically by health service code.

MSI extends special thanks to the billing clerks who reviewed the document prior to its release.

#### Fee schedule changes

As the PMMP moves forward, this merged document will provide the foundation for changes to the fee schedule.

The PMMP steering committee recently approved the use of Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) as the basis for new health service code descriptions and SNOMED-CT as the basis for the diagnostic codes. CPT is a procedural code set maintained by the American Medical Association that has been in use for a

number of years and is updated annually.

CPT will replace the currently used Canadian Classification of Diagnostic, Therapeutic and Surgical Procedures (CCP)-based codes that were developed by Statistics Canada but are no longer being updated. The CPT codes are much more granular than CCP codes. It is expected that the CPT codes will be able to accurately describe all of the work Nova Scotia physicians do. For example, while the current fee schedule contains only one procedural code for appendectomy, the CPT contains a range of codes based upon whether the procedure is performed using an open or laparoscopic approach, whether the appendix is ruptured, and whether or not an abscess is present.

The conversion from the old CCP-based codes to the new CPT codes is currently being undertaken by the project team with input from a number of physicians. Not surprisingly, it's a massive undertaking and the project is still several years from completion.

While the changes mentioned above have been approved by the PMMP Steering Committee; however, they are dependent on future funding.

As always, MSI welcomes inquiries on any billing-related matters. We can be reached at [MSI\\_Assessment@Medavie.BlueCross.ca](mailto:MSI_Assessment@Medavie.BlueCross.ca)

**Rhonda Church, MD,  
Medical Consultant, MSI Programs, Medavie Blue Cross**

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