

# Provider Update

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## Medicare Update to Pneumococcal Vaccine Policy

Amerigroup\* would like to make you aware that the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has changed its policy in regards to pneumococcal vaccines for persons over the age of 65.

What this means to you;

Amerigroup will cover:

- An initial pneumococcal vaccine to all Medicare beneficiaries who have never received the vaccine under Medicare Part B; and
- A different, second pneumococcal vaccine one year after the first vaccine was administered (that is, 11 full months have passed following the month in which the last pneumococcal vaccine was administered).

For additional information on ACIP's change and the Medicare coverage please see MLN Matters on the next page.

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*\*In Texas, Amerigroup members in the Medicaid Rural Service Area are served by Amerigroup Insurance Company; all other Amerigroup members are served by Amerigroup Texas, Inc.*

Amerivantage is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Texas Medicaid program. Enrollment in Amerivantage depends on contract renewal.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



REVISED product from the Medicare Learning Network® (MLN)

- **“Medicare Enrollment and Claim Submission Guidelines”** Booklet (ICN 906764), Hard copy

MLN Matters® Number: MM9051

Related Change Request (CR) #: CR 9051

Related CR Release Date: December 31, 2014

Effective Date: September 19, 2014

Related CR Transmittal #: R202BP and R3159CP

Implementation Date: February 2, 2015

## Modifications to Medicare Part B Coverage of Pneumococcal Vaccinations

### Provider Types Affected

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This MLN Matters® Article is intended for physicians and other providers submitting claims to Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) for services provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

### Provider Action Needed

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Change Request (CR) 9051 provides an update to the Medicare pneumococcal vaccine coverage requirements, to align with new Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations. Make sure your billing staffs are aware of these updates.

### Background

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Medicare Part B covers certain vaccinations including pneumococcal vaccines. Specifically, Section 1861(s)(10)(A) of the Social Security Act, which is available at [http://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/ssact/title18/1861.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title18/1861.htm), and regulations at 42 CFR 410.57 (<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text->

#### Disclaimer

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[idx?SID=85dbd4cb66820b751ffe58a6c58988df&node=se42.2.410\\_157&rgn=div8](#)) authorize Medicare coverage under Part B for pneumococcal vaccine and its administration. For services furnished on or after May 1, 1981, through September 18, 2014, the Medicare Part B program covered pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine and its administration when furnished in compliance with any applicable State law by any provider of services or any entity or individual with a supplier number. Coverage included an initial vaccine administered only to persons at high risk of serious pneumococcal disease (including all people 65 and older; immunocompetent adults at increased risk of pneumococcal disease or its complications because of chronic illness; and individuals with compromised immune systems), with revaccination administered only to persons at highest risk of serious pneumococcal infection and those likely to have a rapid decline in pneumococcal antibody levels, provided that at least 5 years had passed since the previous dose of pneumococcal vaccine.

However, ACIP updated its guidelines regarding pneumococcal vaccines; now recommending the administration of two different pneumococcal vaccinations.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is updating the Medicare coverage requirements to align with the updated ACIP recommendations. Effective for dates of service on or after September 19, 2014, (and upon implementation of CR9051), Medicare will cover:

- An initial pneumococcal vaccine to all Medicare beneficiaries who have never received the vaccine under Medicare Part B; and
- A different, second pneumococcal vaccine one year after the first vaccine was administered (that is, 11 full months have passed following the month in which the last pneumococcal vaccine was administered).

Since the updated ACIP recommendations are specific to vaccine type and sequence of vaccination, prior pneumococcal vaccination history should be taken into consideration. For example, if a beneficiary who is 65 years or older received the 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23) a year or more ago, then the 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) should be administered next as the second in the series of the two recommended pneumococcal vaccinations. Receiving multiple vaccinations of the same vaccine type is not generally recommended. Ideally, providers should readily have access to vaccination history, such as with electronic health records, to ensure reasonable and necessary pneumococcal vaccinations.

Medicare does not require that a doctor of medicine or osteopathy order the vaccine; therefore, the beneficiary may receive the vaccine upon request without a physician's order and without physician supervision.

Note that MACs will not search for and adjust any claims for pneumococcal vaccines and their administration, with dates of service on and after September 19, 2014. However, they may adjust such claims that you bring to their attention.

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## Additional Information

The official instruction, CR9051 issued to your MAC includes two transmittals. The first updates the “Medicare Benefit Policy Manual,” Chapter 15 (Covered Medical and Other Health Services), Section 50.4.4.2 (Immunizations) and “Medicare Claims Processing Manual,” Chapter 18 (Preventive and Screening Services), Section 10.1.1 (Pneumococcal Vaccine) as attachments to that transmittal. It is available at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/Downloads/R202BP.pdf> on the CMS website. The second transmittal updates the “Medicare Claims Processing Manual” and that transmittal is available at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/Downloads/R3159CP.pdf> on the CMS website.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that providers use two pneumococcal vaccines for adults aged  $\geq 65$ . These vaccinations are 13-Valent Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV13) and 23-Valent Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPSV23). For more information on these recommendations, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6337a4.htm> on the CDC website.

If you have questions, please contact your DME MAC at their toll-free number. The number is available at <http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/index.html> under - How Does It Work?

**Seasonal Flu Vaccinations** - Generally, Medicare Part B covers one flu vaccination and its administration per flu season for beneficiaries without co-pay or deductible. Now is the perfect time to vaccinate beneficiaries. Health care providers are encouraged to get a flu vaccine to help protect themselves from the flu and to keep from spreading it to their family, co-workers, and patients. Note: The flu vaccine is not a Part D-covered drug. For more information on coverage and billing of the influenza vaccine and its administration, please visit [MLN Matters® Article MM8890](#), “Influenza Vaccine Payment Allowances - Annual Update for 2014-2015 Season” and [MLN Matters® Article SE1431](#), “2014-2015 Influenza (Flu) Resources for Health Care Professionals.”

While some providers may offer flu vaccines, those that don’t can help their patients locate flu vaccines within their local community. The [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#) is a free online service where users can search for locations offering flu and other adult vaccines. If you provide vaccination services and would like to be included in the HealthMap Vaccine Finder database, [register](#) for an account to submit your information in the database. Also, visit the CDC [Influenza \(Flu\)](#) web page for the latest information on flu including the CDC 2014-2015 recommendations for the prevention and control of influenza.

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