



COA Report

California Orthopaedic Association

December 31, 2020

As 2020 comes to a close, COA would like to wish its members, partners and other industry professionals a safe and happy holiday season. As we reflect on the past year for the industry, we would like to provide the readers of the COA Report a look at the most accessed articles from the year. Our regular publication will resume Friday, Jan. 8.

Workers' Compensation Alert

California Orthopaedic Association

From Nov. 13:
Good News.

The Division of Workers' Compensation has released an updated version of proposed changes to the Medical-Legal Fee Schedule. The Division heard the concerns of physicians and moved back more to implementing the agreement reached by stakeholders (including COA) which is what COA had urged the Division to do.

Highlights of the revised proposed Medical-Legal Fee Schedule

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2020 Coding Policy Updates Include Shoulder Revision

CMS

From Jan. 20: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released the National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI) Policy Manual for Medicare Services for 2020. Specifically, the Arthroscopy section within Musculoskeletal System (Chapter IV) has been revised regarding the shoulder. Previous policy stated that CMS considers the shoulder to be a single anatomic structure. For 2020, this line has been deleted from the manual. While code pair edits remain for some shoulder arthroscopy procedures (eg, 29827, 29828) with limited debridement (eg, 29822), the AAOS applauds this change which it has advocated for since 2010 in conjunction with the following groups: the American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons, the Arthroscopy Association of North America—both members of the Orthopaedic PAC Advisor's Circle—and the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine.

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CMS Announces Historic Changes to Physician Self-Referral Regulations

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

From Nov. 25: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized changes to outdated federal regulations that have burdened health care providers with added administrative costs and impeded the health care system's move toward value-based reimbursement. The Physician Self-Referral Law, also known as the "Stark Law," generally prohibits a physician from making referrals to an entity for certain healthcare services, if the physician has a financial relationship with the entity.

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DWC Issues Emergency Measures for Medical-Legal Evaluations During Governor Newsom's Stay-at-Home Order

State of California Department of Industrial Relations

From April 6: In line with Governor's Newsom's stay-at home order in response to the COVID-19 crisis issued on March 19, the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) encourages primary treating physicians to continue to manage injured workers' care through telehealth options whenever medically appropriate. Telehealth options include remote visits via video-conferencing, video-calling or similar such technology that allows each party to see each other via a video connection. These are viable alternatives to in-person physical examinations for medical-legal evaluations.

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California Orders Insurance Premium Refunds Because of Change Caused By Coronavirus

USA Today

From April 20: California's insurance commissioner recently ordered some companies to refund premiums for March and April because of the coronavirus, issuing a broad directive that includes payments made for workers compensation, medical malpractice and private and commercial auto policies.

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Overlooked Codes Physicians Should Consider

Medical Economics

From Feb. 14: It's a common complaint heard among primary care physicians: Evaluation and management codes don't adequately capture the time, skill, and resources necessary to plan and coordinate care for patients with complex medical needs. Although new, streamlined E/M guidelines for 2021 may help, several existing remedies can enable physicians to capture additional revenue for the services they provide.

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4 Things I've Learned Reading Medical Expert Witness Opinions

The White Coat Investor

From Aug. 14: One of the most interesting parts of medical malpractice lawsuits that Eric Funk, MD, discovered was expert witness opinions. Many states require the plaintiff to submit an expert witness opinion that describes the allegations of negligence along with the initial filing of a lawsuit. These expert witness opinions range from reasonable and thoughtful to egregious and unethical. Here are the top things he learned reading hundreds of expert witness opinions.

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Airlines Told They Must Issue Refunds for Coronavirus Cancellations

AFAR

From April 13: Despite the unprecedented scope of the COVID-19 pandemic, carriers remain obligated to refund passengers when they cancel a scheduled flight — a future flight credit doesn't cut it.

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APL 20-009 — Reimbursement for Telehealth Services

Department of Managed Health Care

From April 6: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that people practice "social distancing." However, people also need to be able to continue to have access to necessary medical care. Accordingly, health plans must take steps to allow people to obtain health care via telehealth when medically appropriate to do so.

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State Compensation Insurance Fund — Forms a New WC Medical Provider Network

COA

From July 24: Are you part of the State Fund Workers' Compensation Medical Provider Network?

If Yes, read the below notice carefully.

If No, but you would like to join the network, it's time to apply.

As of July 27, 2020, Harbor Health will no longer be managing the State Fund WC MPN. State Fund is bringing their network in-house. In late June, network physicians should have received a notice of this change. Injured workers have also been notified.

For a time during this transition, physicians currently in the network will be able to continue to treat their State Fund patients, but State Fund is indicating that not all current network physicians will be transitioned to the new network. Be on the look-out for a letter from State Fund around the end of July, letting you know whether you will be invited to be part of the new network. State Fund is required to have physicians sign new contracts. They have indicated that reimbursement levels will remain the same.

If you are not currently part of the State Fund WC MPN, you can apply.

For more information on this transition and how to apply to join the network, go

to: <https://www.statefundca.com/Home/StaticIndex?id=https://content.statefundca.com/provider/MpnFaq.asp>

For questions specific to your practice, contact State Fund- scifmpn@scif.com Phone: 877-636-0606.



Changes to the Case List Collection Period for the 2021 ABOS Part II Oral Examination

American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery

From April 20: The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery (ABOS) recognizes the sacrifices and contributions that orthopaedic surgeons are making in response to the current healthcare crisis that is affecting our nation. The ABOS continues to encourage all orthopaedic surgeons to take care of their patients, their families, and themselves first and foremost. We understand that schedules have been altered and that, for some individuals, current operative schedules may be limited. Others remain busy taking care of emergent cases.

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