



**AOS Quarterly
Newsletter
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**STATE AFFAIRS
Star Award 2005**

**AA AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY**
The Eye M.D. Association

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Special Points of Interest:

- CODEquest 2009
- CMS Reviews 2007 PQRI Claims Data
- Legislative Session Convenes
- "Red Flag" Rules Delayed
- Meetings & Events

AOS Conducts CODEquest in January 2009

On Friday, January 16, the Arkansas Ophthalmological Society is sponsoring CODEquest 2009, a **half-day coding seminar** for Arkansas Eye MDs and their non-physician office staff, at the Crowne Plaza in Little Rock.

While the physician is ultimately responsible for CPT and diagnosis code selection, each member of the ophthalmic team plays a vital part in coding and documentation of the medical record. The seminar will provide attendees the tools and training needed to be properly reimbursed.

Each attendee will also learn the latest information on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' rules and regulations as well as ways to implement them in the ophthalmic practice.

The seminar will be Arkansas and ophthalmic specific. The course content for the seminar includes the following:

- What's new in 2009 — CPT, HCPCS, ICD-9, and CCI;
- Identification of CMS target codes due to increase in utilization. Make sure your documentation is perfect;
- Surgical cases for all specialties;

- Proper documentation for intravitreal injection visits;
- Know when the ASC claim differs from the physician's;
- Mastering modifiers;
- Coding for special testing services and recognizing what can and can't be billed on the same date of service;
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigations;
- Consultations defined;
- Evaluation and Management Update;
- Specific examples of when to bill an E&M code vs. an Eye code; and
- Understanding all types of audits - why they occur and how you can prepare.

Attendees can email questions ahead of time to codequest@aao.org and receive customized answers during the seminar.

Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. A workbook for the course as well as a continental breakfast will be provided.

Byrd Evans, OCS, COE, is Vice President of Revenue Cycle Operations for Advantage Administration. She has over 20 years of health-care consulting and management experience primarily in ophthalmology.

She has been the administrator of several ophthalmology practices and has

extensive experience in human resources, medical billing, coding, accounts receivable, accounts payable, and accounting.

If you have any questions about the seminar, please contact the Society office at 501-224-8967.

Registration forms are available on the Society's website, www.arkeyemds.org.

Continuing Education

AAPC CE Units

This program has prior approval of the American Academy of Professional Coders for 4 Continuing Education Units. Granting of this approval in no way constitutes endorsement by the Academy of the program, content or the program sponsor.

JCAHPO CE Credits

Ophthalmic Allied Health Professionals receive 4 JCAHPO "A" CE credit for completion of this course.

CME Credits for Physicians

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The American Academy of Ophthalmology designates this educational activity for a maximum of 4 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Additional incentive payments for 2007 will occur after 2008 incentive bonus checks are processed.

CMS Will Review 2007 PQRI Claims Data

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is committed to revisiting data for physicians who did not receive Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) incentive bonuses.

CMS initiated a review of the 2007 PQRI program to instill good will and encourage increased physician participation in the PQRI program. CMS is also reviewing the process to obtain feedback reports.

As a result, more participants are anticipated to receive payment for the 2007 PQRI program. Additional incentive payments for 2007 will occur by October 31, 2009, after 2008 PQRI incentive bonus checks have been processed.

CMS acknowledged several coding errors in its analysis of the 2007 PQRI reporting experience and the majority originated with claim submissions.

Nearly half (46 percent) of all errors entailed "not adhering to measure specifications," such as using an incorrect Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) denominator code, incorrect diagnosis code and incorrect HCPCS and diagnosis code.

CMS will recheck submissions to see if the correct diagnosis is anywhere on the claim (new edits CMS has implemented will solve these problems in the 2008 PQRI). Some split-claims errors may also

be corrected. Errors CMS cannot fix include missing National Provider Information numbers and gender/age mistakes.

CMS acknowledged over-reporting of instances of cataract surgery caused some ophthalmologists to not meet the 80 percent threshold for successful participation. This is attributed to instances when related claims were filed for post-cataract eyeglasses (durable medical equipment claims) or in instances when the surgery was billed from both the physician and an affiliated ASC.

CMS will also review these issues and, going forward, will exclude all claims with service-type "F" (ASC).

General Assembly Convenes in January

The 87th session of the Arkansas General Assembly begins January 12 with the opening week being mostly ceremonial. By the second week, legislative committees will meet to discuss bills.

During the session, Society members will receive updates on ophthalmic issues as they develop.

Most medically-related bills will be debated in the House and Senate Public Health Committees. Members of the committees are listed below.

The **House Public Health Committee members** are:
Rep. Pam Adcock, Little Rock

Rep. Fred Allen, Little Rock
Rep. Mike Burris, Malvern
Rep. Eddie Cooper, Melbourne
Rep. Curren Everett, Salem
Rep. Stephanie Flowers, Pine Bluff
Rep. Billy Gaskill, Paragould
Rep. Clark Hall, Marvell
Rep. Johnny Hoyt, Morrilton
Rep. Nathan George, Dardanelle
Rep. Willie Hardy, Camden
Rep. Eddie Hawkins, Vilonia
Rep. George Overbey Jr., Lamar
Rep. Tracy Pennartz, Fort Smith
Rep. Roy Ragland, Marshall
Rep. Gregg Reep, Warren
Rep. Gene Shelby, MD, Hot Springs
Rep. Lance Reynolds, Quitman
Rep. John Paul Wells, Paris
Rep. Jon Woods, Springdale

The House Public Health committee chairman and vice chairman will be announced the first week of the session.

The **Senate Public Health Committee members** are:
Sen. Gilbert Baker, Conway
Sen. Cecile Bledsoe, Rogers
Sen. Jack Crumbly, Widener
Sen. Barbara Horn, Foreman
Sen. Randy Laverty, Jasper
Sen. Percy Malone, Arkadelphia
Sen. Bill Pritchard, Elkins
Sen. Tracy Steele, NLR

Senator Malone will serve as chair of the Senate Health Committee and Senator Steele will serve as vice chair.

FTC Delays Enforcing of “Red Flag” Rules

As a result of efforts by several medical societies and other medical professional organizations, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has announced its decision to delay enforcement of the “Red Flag” rules until May 1, 2009.

Under the original rules, creditors would have been required to implement an identity theft program by November 1, 2008. The FTC is concerned that many, such as medical practices, do not realize these rules might apply to them.

The FTC would include a medical provider in this definition if the provider does not regularly demand payment in full for services or supplies at the time of service, which, according to the FTC, would be considered extending credit.

The FTC regulation defines a creditor as an entity that regularly extends, renews, continues credit or arranges for the extension of credit.

If a provider is considered a creditor, the FTC stated that the next determining question will be whether the provider maintains covered accounts of its patients.

The FTC defines a covered account as a consumer account designed to permit multiple payments or transactions, or any other account for which there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of identity theft. For a medical practice, this includes patient billing records.

If a practice determines it qualifies as a creditor, the “Red Flag” rules apply. The practice would be required to develop an identity theft program that

contains “reasonable policies and procedures” to:

- Identify relevant patterns, practices, and specific forms of activity that are “red flags,” signaling possible identify theft;
 - Detect these patterns, or “red flags”;
 - Respond to those detected to prevent and mitigate identity theft; and
 - Ensure the program is updated periodically to reflect changes in risks.
- In administering such a program, a creditor would need to:
- Obtain approval of the program from its board or board committee;
 - Involve the board or senior management’s designee(s);
 - Train staff; and
 - Exercise oversight of service provider arrangements.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

FUTURE DATES

2009 Mid-Year Forum

April 22-25, 2009
Capital Hilton Hotel
Washington, DC

2009 AOS Meeting

June 5, 2009
Jones Eye Institute
Little Rock, AR

2009 Regional Meeting

September 24-26, 2009
Big Cedar Lodge
Branson, MO

AAO Joint Meeting with the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology

October 24-27, 2009
Moscone Center
San Francisco, CA

AAO Subspecialty Days will be held prior to the AAO meeting on October 23-24 at the Moscone Center.

OTHER

AMS Seeks Volunteers for “Doctor of the Day”

The Arkansas Medical Society will again sponsor the “Doctor of the Day” program for the 2009 legislative session.

This program has been provided by the Medical Society for a number of years and many ophthalmologists have participated in the program.

The legislative session will convene on January

12 and continues for a minimum of 60 days, but the time can be extended by action of the legislature if needed.

AMS is asking for physicians to volunteer their services for one day during the legislative session to provide physician coverage for the legislators and staff.

The “Doctor of the Day” can attend legislative committee meetings and has floor privileges in the House and Senate. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please contact Laura Hawkins at 501-224-8967 or 800-542-1058.



Letter from the President

Dear AOS Members:

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful visit with family and friends over the holiday season.

As January begins, we are anticipating a very busy legislative session in regard to medical-related legislation. I encourage you to watch for legislative bulletins from the AOS and respond to those requests as soon as you can.

The 2009 coding seminar is also scheduled for January and it will be held in Little Rock. As always,

the seminar will be Arkansas and ophthalmic specific but will follow a new 1/2 day format. Please send in your registration today if you haven't already done so.

Mark your calendar now for the regional meeting on September 24-26, 2009. The meeting will be held in Big Cedar Lodge's new conference center by the Valley View and Falls Lodges.

If you have any suggestions regarding topics or speakers you would like to hear at the regional

meeting, please don't hesitate to contact me or Laura Hawkins at the Society office.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate AOS member Dr. Laurie Barber on her election to the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Board of Trustees as one of the Trustee-at-Large members. Her term begins January 2009 and I'm sure she will be a great advocate for our profession and our patients.

Sincerely,
Katherine H. Baltz, MD

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