

Hi everyone! Hope all is well. Here is some important information:

Informational Update Vol 13 #9

1. Impact of Court Ruling Regarding Medicare Eligible Beneficiaries Right to Appeal “Observation Status” Reclassifications – In

January’22, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld a ruling that allowed Medicare beneficiaries who are admitted to a hospital as “in-patients” and subsequently reclassified as “outpatients” receiving “observation services” the right to appeal the reclassification. What impact does this ruling have on our Medicare eligible retirees? A big one as the decision allows this group to get post-hospital coverage, if necessary, for a skilled nursing facility which otherwise would be unaffordable.

What is a Skilled Nursing Facility?

Often, individuals confuse a nursing home with a skilled nursing facility (SNF) because of their similarities. In fact, many times the terms are used interchangeably. To be clear, a SNF provides more “skilled” medical expertise and services than a nursing home. Basically, a SNF provides rehabilitation services to help injured, sick or disabled individuals get back on their feet.

Generally, hospitals make the arrangements to transfer a Medicare eligible patient to a SNF after an acute hospital stay, such as surgery. To qualify for such a transfer, i.e. Medicare covers the SNF stay, the patient must be in the hospital for a minimum of 3 consecutive days. Normally, the patient would go home after his/her stay in the SNF. However, there may be situations where the patient needs to be readmitted to the hospital and then again to the SNF for more skilled care.

What is the coverage for staying at an SNF?

- Days 1-20: \$0 (covered by Medicare)
- Days 21-100: \$0. (covered by Blue Cross Blue Shield)
- Days 101 and beyond: You pay all costs.

2. **Careington** - Careington is a nation-wide dental plan that is now part of the SIDS program. It is intended to save additional money for SIDS members who live in an area where there aren't participating SIDS dentists. Here is how it works:

- Go to a Careington dentist of your choice. You can find a list of Careington dentists by going on the website www.asonet.com. This will require that you open an account. Once you have an account, follow the prompts to open the directory. The Careington dentists are listed in red.
- The dentist should charge you the Careington discount price for the service.
- The dentist will submit the claim (charge) to SIDS.
- You will be responsible for the difference between what SIDS reimburses for the claim and Careington's discount charge.

For example, suppose you need a crown and Careington's charge is \$750 (a crown is normally over \$1,000). SIDS will pay \$500 to the provider and you will be responsible for the difference, or \$250.

3. **Question of the Month**

Q. As a dependent surviving spouse, I was told I am entitled to reimbursement of my prescription co-pays. Please explain.

A. When your CSA member spouse passed away, your CSA Retiree Welfare Fund benefits continued for five years from the date of the member's death, or if you remarry, or if your dependent status terminates, at no cost to you. One of the benefits you are entitled to is a prescription drug benefit providing you are covered by a city plan through COBRA or your own health plan with a prescription drug plan.

The benefit works as follows: After a \$100 deductible, you are entitled to 80% of the cost up to a maximum of \$5,000 for the year. The CSA Retiree Chapter also reimburses 20% of the Fund reimbursement.

For example, if your drug claim is \$2,000, the Fund will reimburse you \$1,520. About 2 to 3 weeks after receiving your reimbursement, the

Retiree Chapter will reimburse you an additional 20% of \$1,520 or \$304. Your total reimbursement is \$1,824. This is a seamless operation so you do not have to file a claim with the Retiree Chapter.

Have a safe and healthy day,

Norm Sherman