

Payment Policy Subcommittee Looks to Academy Sections for Expert Input

Recent work by the Payment Policy Subcommittee of the Medical Economics and Management Committee has triggered requests from large payers such as WellPoint and UnitedHealth Care to provide input on a number of their proposed medical policies.

When the Academy is approached by payers, the Payment Policy Subcommittee strives to provide as thorough a response as possible. From time to time, the Payment Policy Subcommittee requests that section members review and provide input on these policies when subspecialty input is needed. Section members are able to provide unique expertise about specific neurological treatments and procedures.

With each researched and logical response sent from the Academy to a payer, the Academy establishes itself as the prime organization that should be involved in the policy development process for those policies affecting neurology. The Academy also gains credibility and respectability as an organization. The Academy should continue to be the organization that payers look to for guidance on policies that will affect our membership.

The Academy appreciates the opportunity to provide input on medical policies prior to their implementation because payers have models in place to develop policies if we do not provide the model or at least input and guidance. The collaboration is a good opportunity to get Academy expert opinion heard and head some potential problems off before they become major issues for a large number of members.

Section members should bear in mind that the policies are general statements—amalgams of science and regulations—that address most average users under ordinary conditions. The Subcommittee asks that members please not view them as comprehensive treatises. The role of the Academy is not to engage in a debate either endorsing or questioning minute scientific details. Our input should rather broadly ensure that the intended policy becomes an opportunity for reasonable practice of neurology, and that it is not severely restrictive.

At times, there are some limited aspects of a policy that simply reproduce statutory, regulatory or contractual language beyond the influence of payers or policy writers. Payment Policy Subcommittee members will strive to identify these sections and choose not to question them. In these and other instances, those providers seeking exceptions for unusual clinical circumstances can always approach the insurer for individual consideration.

Thank you for your continued partnership on these initiatives. The Subcommittee looks forward to further collaboration in the future. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Katie Kuechenmeister, The Academy's Payment Policy Subcommittee Staff Liaison, at kkuechenmeister@aan.com or (651) 695-2783.

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