Payment Policy Subcommittee Looks to Academy Sections for Expert Input

The Academy—through volunteer efforts of members of the Payment Policy Subcommittee—seeks to develop relationships with national health insurers to shape coverage policy. As a result, several of the largest payers (e.g. WellPoint, UnitedHealthcare) regularly request AAN subject matter review and input on drafts of proposed policies prior to implementation.

When the Academy is approached by payers for input, the Payment Policy Subcommittee strives to facilitate a thorough response. In order to do so, the group frequently requests help from within the Academy’s sections to review and provide input on applicable policies, as section members are able to provide unique expertise about specific neurological treatments and procedures.

Each researched, logical response submitted to a payer establishes the Academy as the premier organization that should be involved in the development process for neurologic policies. The Academy also gains credibility and respectability as an organization. The Academy should continue to be the first organization that payers look to for guidance on policies that will affect our members.

The Academy appreciates the opportunity to provide input on policies prior to implementation. This unique collaboration enables dialogue between experts within the Academy and the payer, and can be an opportunity to head off potential problems before they become major hassles for a large number of members.

Section members should bear in mind that “coverage” or “medical” policies are general statements—amalgams of science and regulations—that address average users under ordinary conditions. Please do not view policies as comprehensive treatises. The role of the Academy is not to engage in a debate either endorsing or questioning minute scientific details, rather, our input should broadly ensure that the intended policy becomes an opportunity for the 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. Academy Payment Policy Subcommittee volunteers will strive to identify these areas within a policy and choose not to question them. In these and other instances, 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 Payment Policy Subcommittee looks forward to further collaboration in the future.