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June 22, 2010



Remote Area Medical Needs You - July 9-11

Volunteer for a Day at OKC 3-Day Free Clinic

Remote Area Medical will be coming to Oklahoma City for what local organizers plan to be the first of many RAM free care events in Oklahoma.



The event will provide free dental, vision, and medical care to about 2,000 people Friday through Sunday, July 9-11 in the Travel & Transportation building of the Oklahoma State Fair Park.

(For a closer look at how RAM operates, watch this ["60 Minutes" feature.](#))

RAM still needs approximately 3-4 more volunteer ophthalmologists per day for the duration of the event. They will have full lanes set up for exams, so all is needed is you and your medical expertise. The day runs from 6 AM to 3 PM; breakfast and lunch are provided. They prefer that providers work the entire day, but understand if you must leave early.

Please consider signing up for this extraordinary event. You may register on their website at www.ramok.org/volunteer.

About RAM

Based in Knoxville, Tenn., Remote Area Medical was founded in 1985 to air-drop medical relief to areas of Central and South America.

British-born adventurer Stan Brock founded RAM as an all-volunteer health and veterinary care organization that would provide services in desolate places outside of the United States.

But in the mid 1990s, the obvious need for improved health care access led RAM to hold its first mobile expedition in Tennessee.

Since that time, demand for RAM's services in America has only increased, and RAM has since held free dental, vision and general medical care expeditions in Kentucky, Virginia and California.

In Oklahoma, local supporters have formed RAM Oklahoma, an affiliate of the non-profit.

In the long-term, RAM Oklahoma will expand with its own mobile equipment to provide free care around the state and to augment other

organizations' existing health care efforts.

PECOS Registration -- CRITICAL UPDATE

by John Haley, MD, Dallas; AAO Health Policy Committee Member

Dr. Haley is the Third Party Payer Liaison for the Texas Ophthalmological Association. OAO is fortunate to have the benefit of his expertise now that our two states share a common Medicare administrative contractor.

PROVIDER ENROLLMENT, CHAIN OF OWNERSHIP SYSTEM

PECOS is the CMS computer enrollment system developed to combat fraud. In the past fraudulent physicians and fraudulent DME companies have wasted millions/billions of Medicare dollars. A strong provider enrollment system equals strong fraud prevention. Medicare must identify who and where providers are located. Many providers have found out the hard way that one piece of misdelivered mail can trigger Medicare disenrollment.

The system has been in use for Medicare enrollment since 2003, but old-timers like myself pre-date the system. Now CMS is pressing the issue, which means we must essentially re-enroll through the PECOS system.

All providers must be enrolled in the PECOS system by January 4, 2011. But labs and DME providers must be enrolled by July 6, 2010. There will be many disasters for those not enrolled in PECOS and many unintended consequences. For instance, if you reorder from labs of DME providers, if you are not enrolled in PECOS by July 6, 2010, the system will not recognize your ability to order (even though the DME/lab is enrolled in PECOS), so it would be best to enroll by July 6, 2010.

Be sure to check now at Trailblazerhealth.com to see if you are enrolled in PECOS.

If you are not enrolled in PECOS by January 4, 2011, you will be disenrolled from Medicare and you will need to go through the whole enrollment process. You'll be going through a lot of grief if you do not get it fixed now.

See Also: [CMS Tips on PECOS Enrollment](#).

Medicare Cuts Take Effect

House-Senate Standoff Threatens to Keep Fix Just Out of Reach

Last week was a rollercoaster for Medicare physician pay, highlighting the urgent need for permanent repeal of the sustainable growth rate system. The Senate failed to pass a 19-month fee fix due to a GOP filibuster against unemployment benefits contained in the legislation, but then passed legislation that temporarily reverses the 21 percent Medicare physician pay cut in place since June 1 and provides a 2.2 percent update through Nov. 30.



However, because of Senate delays, the House had recessed and is not due to return for votes until Tuesday evening. Meanwhile, House leadership has indicated that the 6-month Medicare fee fix, without the extension of unemployment benefits, is unacceptable to them.

On Friday, CMS directed contractors to lift the hold on claims for services paid for the first 10 business days of June and begin processing June 1 and later claims under the law's negative update requirement.

What can you do?

- Hold Congressional candidates accountable to this issue
- [Continue to let Congress, your patients and your communities know what you think](#)
- [Give to OPHTHPAC](#)

Keep the Pressure on Congress for a Permanent Fix

If you have not already done so, ask your employees and patients to join in this effort and sign the [Texas Medical Association's online million-signature national campaign calling for a permanent solution to Medicare physician pay](#). A patient flyer (in [color](#) or [B/W](#)) that includes a brief summary of the issue and the Web link for the petition is also provided.

That's all for now.

Sincerely,



Mike Duncan
Executive Director
Oklahoma Academy of Ophthalmology



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