

## **Physician Advisory Board Meeting of May 4, 2007**

The Aetna Physician Advisory Board met on May 4, 2007, in Miami, Florida. This was the Board's seventh face-to-face meeting since its inception in late 2003. The Board is scheduled to meeting again in November 2007.

Drs. Troy Brennan, William Gee, Stanley Goldfarb, Scott Hayworth, Robert Harrison, Russell Libby, Leonard Lichtenfeld, Diane Wallis and Michael Workings attended. Also attending for Aetna were Dr. James Cross, Amanda St. Amand and Karen Upchurch, and attending for Aetna by phone were Dr. Dexter Campinha-Bacote, Wayne Gowdy, Paul Marchetti, Mark Rubino and Robert Stillman.

### *Compliance Update*

Mr. Stillman provided an update regarding disputes concerning Aetna's compliance with the physician class action settlement agreement. Following this presentation, there was discussion of appropriate dispute resolution processes and the role of the Physician Advisory Board following expiration of the settlement agreement.

### *Vaccine Pricing Workgroup*

Dr. Cross then reported on the initial efforts of the vaccine workgroup, including Drs. Harrison and Libby, formed in response to comments raised at the previous Physician Advisory Board meeting. Dr. Cross mentioned, among other ideas, the possibility of arranging for Aetna to pay a distributor directly for vaccines, at the physician's election, and there was discussion of other costs incurred by physician offices relating to vaccines.

### *CT Angiography*

Dr. Cross summarized proposed revisions to Aetna's Clinical Policy Bulletin regarding CT angiography and intensity-modulated treatment delivery. Dr. Cross explained that, as part of a study to determine effectiveness of CTA angiography for certain diagnostic situations, Aetna will pay for members undergoing that procedure in connection with that study.

### *Color Flow Doppler and Multiple Procedure Values*

Dr. Cross also summarized discussions with the American College of Cardiology regarding reimbursement policies for color flow Doppler echocardiography. He then described planned computer system changes to assist Aetna in accurately paying claims for multiple surgical procedures, regardless of place of service. Board members encouraged creation of a newsletter article to explain the coding issue to physicians, including the appropriate use of Modifier 22 to signify unusual circumstances.

### *MAC for GI*

Dr. Cross then provided an update concerning further revisions to the content, as well as the planned implementation, of Aetna's reimbursement policy regarding monitored anesthesia care for colonoscopies.

### *Rental Networks*

Dr. Brennan then discussed the subject of rental networks. He indicated that Aetna may rent another plan's network in geographic areas in which Aetna does not have a large enough market share to cost-effectively contract directly with providers. Dr. Brennan further explained that Aetna is committed to the transparency of rental network arrangements.

Dr. Gee indicated that these arrangements cause confusion because of differences in payment results. In response, Dr. Cross shared that Aetna is able to coordinate fee schedules with a rental network but, at this time, is not able to fully implement the reimbursement logic of other networks. Dr. Brennan observed that Aetna has not received any complaints in this area.

### *Pharmacy Precertification*

Mr. Rubino then reviewed the pharmacy precertification approval process. He reviewed Aetna's process for determining the medications for which precertification is required and related communication and evaluation processes. During the presentation, there was discussion of patient safety and privacy issues that may arise in conjunction with pairing prescriptions with diagnosis codes, as well as suggestions for easing physicians' administrative efforts needed to help patients comply with step-therapy requirements.

### *Radiology Benefits Management*

Drs. Wallis and Brennan then discussed radiology benefits management (RBM), with particular focus on its application to cardiology. Among other things, Dr. Wallis expressed a view that radiology use in cardiology is medically appropriate. There was also discussion of the administrative costs associated with the RBM process and the criteria to determine coverage for specific radiology services in cardiology.

### *Physician Advisory Board Mailbox*

Referring to materials distributed in advance of the meeting, Dr. Cross then reviewed items submitted through the mailbox that were selected for discussion by the Board. The topics included radiologists billing E&M codes, physical therapists performing a PT evaluation during the surgical global period, and the addition of diagnosis codes to Aetna's Wound Care Clinical Policy Bulletin.

### *Health Care Transparency*

Mr. Gowdy then discussed Aetna's efforts to promote transparency in the area of health care costs. There was discussion of other information, such as questions to ask physicians that would be helpful as supplements to cost information. There was also discussion of the efficiency measurements displayed to members and of the Aexcel<sup>®</sup> program.

### *Health Literacy*

Dr. Campinha-Bacote then summarized the challenges arising from inadequate health literacy and Aetna's efforts in response.

*Electronic Education*

Ms. Upchurch then discussed Aetna's efforts to communicate with physicians and provide educational materials via electronic means. She demonstrated Aetna's Education Site for Health Care Professionals, located on the secure provider website.