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Breaking News: Medicare Approves New Physician Specialty Code Specific for Medical Genetics and Genomics

Following a formal request from ACMG, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved a new physician specialty code specific for Medical Genetics and Genomics.

In the CMS approval letter, they noted, “After reviewing the information submitted with the request and based on our research, we are approving a unique specialty code for ‘Medical Genetics and Genomics.’”

Most ACMG members were not aware that prior to this new specialty code approval, M.D. geneticists had to be enrolled as Medicare providers either under a “specialty unknown” code or, if they were also board-certified in a second specialty (i.e. Pediatrics, Internal Medicine or Obstetrics), under that code. This was especially problematic for M.D. geneticists boarded only in their primary specialty (Medical Genetics), since no code existed. Once Medicare implements this new specialty code, all M.D. geneticists should request to be enrolled as a Medical Genetics and Genomics specialist.

ACMG strongly advocated that CMS recognize the primary specialty of Medical Genetics and Genomics, stating, “It is of utmost importance for patients and physicians to be able to locate clinical geneticists with the skills and training unique to the specialty of Clinical Genetics and Genomics... We believe that this specialty code will allow CMS to more appropriately assess physician practice patterns and quality of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries and to better recognize clinical genetics practitioners and the increasing role of genetic and genomic medicine in the diagnosis and treatment of older adults and other beneficiaries of the Medicare program.”

ACMG President, Dr. Louanne Hudgins, FACMG said, “This is great news! It represents progress in having Medical Genetics and Genomics being recognized as a distinct entity in the practice of medicine, as a whole.”

ACMG would also like to express appreciation to the American Board of Medical Specialties and the American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics who submitted a joint letter of support for ACMG’s request to CMS.

Per CMS, the implementation process, including assigning the new specialty code, the

development of appropriate systems and scheduling implementation may take up to a year to complete.

ACMG will keep members updated of any developments in this watershed event.



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Taking Action and Advocating for Medical Genetics

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