

As part of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA), by January 1, 2012, all nonhospital providers of advanced diagnostic imaging, inclusive of nuclear medicine, MRI, CT, and PET, must be accredited as a condition for reimbursement. The accreditation requirement applies to physicians, nonphysician practitioners, and physician and non-physician organizations that are paid for providing the technical component of advanced imaging services under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule.

On January 26, 2010, the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC), along with the American College of Radiology and the Joint Commission, was approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to accredit suppliers seeking to furnish the technical component of advanced diagnostic imaging services under the Medicare program.

“While advanced diagnostic imaging procedures can be useful in identifying health problems that might otherwise require surgery, the rapid growth in their use raises important questions of quality and safety,” said Barry Straube, MD, CMS chief medical officer and director of the CMS Office of Standards and Quality. “The three organizations that will be accrediting suppliers have the expertise and authority to set a standard of excellence industrywide.”

To receive the designation by CMS, the accrediting organizations were required to demonstrate experience in the advanced diagnostic imaging area and to document that their accreditation requirements met or exceeded the standards set out in MIPPA, including requirements for...

- Qualifications of nonphysician personnel performing the imaging;
- Qualifications and responsibilities of medical directors and supervising physicians;



- Procedures to ensure the safety of the individuals furnishing the imaging procedure and of the persons to whom the services are furnished;
- Procedures to ensure the reliability, clarity, and accuracy of the technical quality of the diagnostic images produced by the supplier;
- Procedures to assist beneficiaries in obtaining their imaging records on request; and
- Procedures to notify CMS of any changes to the imaging modalities subsequent to the accrediting organization’s decision.

Sandra Katanick, CAE, CEO of the IAC, remarked, “Having offered nationally recognized, voluntary accreditation programs for more than 20 years, the IAC is proud to receive recognition by CMS as a designated accrediting organization for MIPPA. We submitted a comprehensive application which documented every aspect of the IAC divisions’ highly regarded processes of accreditation. Through the requirement put into place by MIPPA, Medicare patients will receive the benefits of quality diagnostic imaging procedures performed only in accredited laboratories.”

The following IAC divisions offer accreditation programs specifically related to the MIPPA requirement:

- ICANL (the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Nuclear Medicine Laboratories) offers accreditation for nuclear medicine, nuclear cardiology, and PET facilities (www.icanl.org).
- ICACTL (the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Computed Tomography Laboratories) offers accreditation for CT in the areas of coronary calcium scoring, cardiovascular CT angiography, neurologic imaging (brain and spine CT angiography), sinus and temporal bone imaging, body CT (chest [noncardiac], abdomen, pelvis, extremity), and body CT angiography (chest [noncardiac], abdomen, pelvis, peripheral/extremity) (www.icactl.org).
- ICAMRL (the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Magnetic Resonance Laboratories) offers accreditation for MRI in the areas of body, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, and neurologic imaging (www.icamrl.org).

The IAC website, www.intersocietal.org, contains links to the CMS published documents including the January 26, 2010, issue of the *Federal Register* containing the notice of CMS’ approval of the IAC for fulfillment of the accreditation requirement for advanced diagnostic imaging.

It is critical that providers realize the time and effort required to obtain accreditation. MIPPA requires that the laboratories essentially have a certificate in hand on or before January 1, 2012, in order to be reimbursed through CMS. The IAC recommends that laboratories begin work on their applications for accreditation now and submit them before July 2011 to allow ample time to achieve accreditation. Laboratories embarking on the ICANL and ICACTL accreditation processes should begin by reviewing the standards and purchasing the online accreditation application, as available on the ICANL and ICACTL Web

sites. Submitted applications undergo a thorough in-house review for completeness followed by a detailed peer review evaluation. The ICANL and ICACTL boards of directors each render accreditation decisions, in accordance with the findings of the peer review evaluation. The accreditation

granted by the ICANL and ICACTL signifies that a laboratory has been reviewed by an independent agency and that the applicant facility was found to be in substantial compliance with objective standards of quality.

Laboratories are encouraged to contact the IAC office (800-838-2110)

today or visit the Web sites (www.intersocietal.org) to start the accreditation process.

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*Intersocietal Accreditation
Commission*