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ISSUE: Tricare Reimbursement Issues

The Southeast Georgia Health System is located in Southeast Georgia and is comprised of two hospitals, a nursing home, an ear, nose & throat surgical center and multiple primary care, immediate care and specialty care physician practices. The facilities and practices are located in Camden County, Glynn County, McIntosh County and Brantley County.

The Southeast Georgia Health System experiences a recurring problem with the referral web site not being regularly updated to reflect participating providers. It is a usual occurrence to have new providers that are unable to receive referrals for several months utilizing the web site because the provider is not listed. This situation has been worked on by local Tricare representative with little success.

Currently Tricare does not list immediate care/urgent care physicians as Primary Care Manager's (PCM's). Some of our physicians work as primary care physicians or are supervising physicians for family nurse practitioners and have patients that wish to have these clinicians as their PCM. It would therefore be beneficial to both Tricare beneficiaries and physicians for the immediate care/urgent care physician to be listed as a PCM.

The Southeast Georgia Health System - Camden Campus, a 40 bed acute care facility, and the physician practices in Camden County have a high volume of Tricare beneficiaries as a direct result of being in close proximity to the Naval Submarine Base, Kings Bay. It is not unusual for a primary care practice in Camden County to experience a total of 60-70% of reimbursement coming from a combined Medicare and Tricare population. This presents a serious financial burden for these practices that experience a disproportionate share of Medicare and Tricare patients.

Recommendation: Given the low reimbursements with Champus Maximum Allowable Charge (CM AC), it is highly recommended that the CM AC rates be adjusted to a more reasonable rate or to create a rate based on a disproportional percentage of Tricare beneficiaries.

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