



November 20, 2017

Secretary David J. Shulkin
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue
Washington D.C. 20420

Rep. Raul Ruiz
1319 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Phil Roe
336 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Grace Rodden
Chief Counsel
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Minority
333 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Re: Outstanding Veteran Claims for Emergency Professional Services

Dear Secretary Shulkin, Rep. Ruiz, Rep. Roe, and Ms. Godden:

The Emergency Department Practice Management Association (EDPMA) is one of the nation's largest professional physician trade associations focused on the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective care in the emergency department. EDPMA's membership includes emergency medicine physician groups, as well as billing, coding, and other professional support organizations that assist healthcare providers in our nation's emergency departments. **Together, EDPMA's members deliver (or directly support) health care for about half of the 141 million patients that visit U.S. emergency departments each year.** We work collectively and collaboratively to deliver essential healthcare services, often unmet elsewhere, to an underserved patient population who often has nowhere else to turn.

EDPMA is requesting your help with processing and adjudicating claims submitted by

emergency physicians for the emergency care of veterans. EDPMA members have identified tens of thousands of Veterans claims for emergency professional services that are outstanding. A survey of three of our members identified over 28,000 claims that are more than 120 days outstanding. This only represents a small fraction of the number of claims that are likely outstanding. In some cases, the claims still have not been adjudicated after several years. Almost 17,000 claims were denied and appeals were filed on over 11,000 of those claims. Some of the issues that have been identified as resulting in delays in processing claims include the following:

- Failure of the VA to respond to initial claim submissions,
- Inability to reach the VA for claim follow-up. Many locations will not answer phone calls, return calls, or accept spreadsheets of multiple claims requesting claims status,
- Requests from VA staff for medical records when ED records were already mailed with the original claims, including requests for records that appear to be irrelevant to the ED physician's claim,
- Requests for additional information that are not clear,
- Refusal to process ED physician claims using the ED clinical records when patients are admitted to the hospital. Instead VA staff require hospital progress notes and the discharge summary and various other records,
- Requests for specific pieces of medical record such as notes, discharge summary, etc. that are not in the possession of the provider and not sent by the hospital since the facility bills Medicare (and not the VA), and
- Untimely filing denials, often precipitated by the VA's failure to respond to calls or to timely process initial claim filings.

Some of the VA offices that have been identified as problematic include:

Milwaukee, WI	Muskogee, OK	Biloxi, MS
New Orleans, LA	Indiana	Jackson, MS
Decatur, GA	Orlando, FL	Gainesville, FL
Mare Island, CA	Tampa, FL	Jacksonville, FL
Loma Linda, CA	Bay Pines, FL	Tallahassee, FL
Menlo Park, CA	Miami, FL	Port St Lucie, FL
North Hills, CA	Dublin, GA	Lakeland, FL
Buffalo, NY	Virginia- all locations	
St. Louis, MO	Las Vegas, NV	

Members of EDPMA have been working with Grace Rodden, Chief Counsel House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Director, Claims Adjudication and Reimbursement in the Office of VA Community Care, to resolve the issues described above. Although we have made some progress and some of the issues are currently being addressed, the issues described above are far

November 20, 2017

Page 3

from being resolved. EDPMA believes that the policies that are currently used to adjudicate claims need to be changed to relieve the backlog of outstanding provider claims. EDPMA would recommend the following changes:

- emergency physician provider claims should be adjudicated based on the emergency department medical record,
- regional VA offices should accept spreadsheets of outstanding claims from billing companies,
- VA claims staff should be available to answer calls about the status of claims and what is required to finish processing a claim, and
- No authorization should be required for emergency services.

The EDPMA appreciates the opportunity to share our concerns and provide potential solutions. EDPMA would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss our concerns. Please contact Elizabeth Munding, Executive Director of EDPMA, at emunding@edpma.org if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Andrea Brault, MD, FACEP, MMM, Chair of the Board
Emergency Department Practice Management Association (EDPMA)