

*AAP Private Payer Advocacy Update  
June 2006*

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**1. Anthem rescinds blended rates program in southern Ohio in face of opposition from AAP, medical and specialty societies**

Anthem announced the end of its blended rate policy in Southwest Ohio on June 1, 2006 in which the carrier paid the same rate for E/M codes 99213/99214 and 99203/99204. Anthem will implement a physician fee schedule based on a differentiated payment rate level for levels three and four of E&M codes effective September 1, 2006. The AAP sent 2 letters to Anthem and participated in regional meetings with other specialty societies and Anthem to resolve the issue. Attached is the letter sent to the Ohio State Medical Society which the AAP was copied from **Anthem rescinds the blended rates policy**

**2. Pediatricians represented on Wellpoint Physician Advisory Board**

Richard Tuck, MD, FAAP (Ohio) and Jeffrey Linzer, MD, FACEP, FAAP (Georgia) have been appointed to the Wellpoint Physician Advisory Board (PAB). The PAB was created as part of the Wellpoint/Anthem settlement agreement and will  
Both Dr. Tuck and Linzer are members of the AAP Committee on Coding and Nomenclature (COCN).

**3. Aetna changes its policy on Modifier 25**

Aetna and several state medical societies have been in mediation over payment of claims appended with Modifier 25 and an agreement was reached resulting in Aetna paying separately for *specific* procedures billed with an Evaluation and Management (E&M) code appended with Modifier 25. Previously denied claims with dates of service **from July 1, 2004 for *specific* procedures** (including CPT code 99173 {vision screening} and 96110 {developmental screening}) **billed with an E&M code appended with Modifier 25**. Claims submitted without a modifier originally should not be resubmitted. Aetna will pay the specific procedures listed on its website they are billed with an E&M code appended with a Modifier. Additional information including the list of CPT codes can be accessed on the Aetna website at:  
[http://www.aetna.com/provider/aetna\\_changes\\_modifier.html](http://www.aetna.com/provider/aetna_changes_modifier.html)

#### **4. New Jersey Chapter Pediatric Council Adds to its Successes**

The New Jersey Chapter pediatric council has been meeting with up to 13 carriers over the past 7 years and has developed a strong rapport resulting in recent successes.

##### **A. School Violence Awareness**

All the carriers participating in the pediatric council agreed to a statewide effort to promote awareness of school violence. From September through December 2006, the plans will include information and resources on school violence in carrier newsletters. Also under development is a proposal for the carriers to fund a video on school violence prevention.

##### **B. Wellchoice to pay pediatrician newborn visits**

After several letters by pediatricians and contacts by the NJ Department of Banking and Insurance, WellChoice of New Jersey (Empire BCBS) will now pay for pediatrician visits during the newborn stay. Previously WellChoice would only pay for up to 2 pediatrician visits regardless of the length of stay.

#### **5. AAP to address Retail Clinics**

As reported in the May 2006 AAP On Call, at its May 2006 meeting, the AAP Board of Directors voted to develop, and expedite, a new policy statement in reaction to the controversial retail health clinics. These clinics offer minimal health care services through retail outlets. The Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine (COPAM) will take the lead and work with the Committee on Child Health Financing (COCHF) and PPAAC on developing a statement. AAP President Dr. Eileen Ouellette also wrote a letter to the New York Times discussing some of the problems surrounding these clinics. The letter is available in the Media Center of the [AAP Member Center](#) and is attached below as **NY Times Retail Clinics**.

#### **6. Influenza Resource Page now available**

A brand new **Influenza Resource Page** for health care professionals, developed by the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases, is now online at [www.aapredbook.org/flu](http://www.aapredbook.org/flu). This comprehensive list of influenza resources is designed to serve as a centralized point of reference for vaccine, prevention, treatment, reimbursement, policies, news, and other information pertaining to seasonal, avian, and pandemic influenza and will be updated periodically with new information and links as necessary. These resources can be used for private payer advocacy by chapters and members in dealing with carrier coverage issues.

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