



Powered by The Valley Health System and Kindred Hospitals



April 2025

Newsletter

Volume 118

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#VegasStrong

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ATTENTION: WATCH OUT FOR FRAUD

Silver State ACO is sharing this information to advise Participant Practices to be alert to any unusual claims or requests. Patients should be made aware of this, as well. Providers should warn patients about possible fraud by discussing it or posting a notice.

The National Association of ACOs (NAACOS) noticed a massive spike in Medicare claims for catheters. Catheters are generally low-cost items and, therefore, may not be carefully scrutinized when ordered. However, when there were over 400,000 *additional* claims for catheters over two years, the overall cost soared.

Also, there has been an increase in spending on Skin Substitutes. The Institute for Accountable Care analyzed Medicare claims data and found spending on these products jumped from **\$1.6 billion in 2022** to **\$6.9 billion** through the first nine months of 2024. Importantly, some of the highest users of these products have already been subject to Justice Department actions. Learn more [here](#).

Tips for your patients

- Review any Explanation of Benefits documents you receive. Scan for any supplies you did not order or services you did not do.
- Be suspicious of anyone who offers you free medical equipment and then requests your Medicare number. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.
- If medical equipment is delivered to you, don't accept it unless it was ordered by your physician. Refuse the delivery or return it to the sender. Keep a record of the sender's name and the date you returned the items.

If you suspect Medicare fraud, report it immediately online or call the HHS-OIG Hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477).

[Video on How to Stop DME Fraud](#)

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Southern Nevada
Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Northern Nevada:
Thursday, May 1, 2025

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Sarah, Savannah, and Sonia.



Spotlight: Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions of people nationwide. According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), 11.6% of Americans had diabetes in 2023 and over 1.2 million are diagnosed each year, with many more going undiagnosed. It has been estimated that 1 out of 4 adults with diabetes are not aware of their condition. With numbers on the rise, it is essential to understand this disease, how it impacts patients and what can be done to manage it.

Early detection is crucial to managing diabetes and preventing complications. Approximately 97.6 million Americans have pre-diabetes which often precedes Type 2 diabetes. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) covers two diabetes screenings within a 12-month period. Patients with certain risk factors or who have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes qualify.

There are three primary types of diabetes:

- Type 1: An autoimmune disorder where the pancreas makes little or no insulin. This is typically diagnosed in childhood but can develop at any age.
- Type 2: The most common form where the body has trouble controlling blood sugar and using it for energy. It is often linked to lifestyle factors such as poor diet, physical inactivity, and obesity.
- Gestational Diabetes: This type occurs during pregnancy and usually resolves after childbirth.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes diabetes can lead to severe health conditions such as heart disease, kidney failure, nerve damage, blindness, amputations and more. Not only does diabetes impact health, but it also has a large economic impact. The ADA estimates that in 2022, the national cost of diabetes was around *\$413 billion* with approximately 61% of expenditures being used by patients aged 65 and older. On average, people with diabetes spend about 2.6 times more on medical care than those without diabetes.



Attempting to control diabetes involves encouraging patients to make lifestyle changes, regularly monitoring blood sugar levels and compliance with medication and treatment. It is recommended to suggest programs focused on weight management, physical activity, and balanced diets. Regular checkups should be scheduled to monitor blood sugar levels and screen for further complications.



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Understanding the magnitude diabetes has on the Medicare population, CMS requires the ACO to report on the **quality measure “Diabetes: Glycemic Status Assessment Greater Than 9%”**. This ensures a focus on continuing to improve and maintain the health of each diabetic patient.

For this measure, CMS requires patients with a diagnosis of diabetes AND who are between the ages of 18-75 to have a glycemic status assessment (which CMS defines as a hemoglobin A1c/HbA1c or glucose management indicator/GMI) completed during 2025. The goal is to maintain a “controlled” HbA1c. Please note that **CMS considers HbA1c to be “controlled” if it is 8.9% or lower.**

By prioritizing preventive care, Silver State ACO participating practices can boost their quality performance, leading to better health outcomes and overall higher patient satisfaction.

Please reach out to your Quality Coordinator if you have any questions or need any assistance understanding the Diabetes quality measure.

SECURITY REMINDERS

In April, 2023, the SSACO newsletter discussed the emergence of Artificial Intelligence. The implications of its use, as well as its power, have increased substantially in the past two years. Staff members are exposed to it regularly, sometimes aware of it but, often, not. One

of the possibilities discussed at that time was the ability for AI to detect phishing or fraudulent emails very effectively. The question asked was whether AI could, in turn, create very effective phishing emails that could not be detected by other AI programs. A bit of a circuitous and philosophical question. (“Can a Superior Being create a rock that the Superior Being cannot lift?”). The answer is still elusive, though the possibilities have become clearer... as well as more dangerous.

The sophistication of fraud and theft of information has increased exponentially. Even voices can now be mimicked. This has led to more “work” for everyone, mainly by being required to use two factor authentication for nearly all secure programs, platforms or websites. There is nowhere that being vigilant is more important than in your practice.

If you receive an email from someone you don’t recognize, be sure to verify who sent it. NEVER provide a patient’s information – or yours – unless you are absolutely certain that the requestor is real and that



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the request is valid! Your patients are looking to you for medical care, and entrust their sensitive data to you with the hope and belief that you will guard it as carefully as you would your own. This may take a bit more time but is certainly worth it. Fixing a problem is far more time-consuming, expensive, and bothersome than avoiding one. We cannot overstate it. AI is here. It's effective. It's tricky. It's dangerous. Keep it in mind. Better safe than sorry.

Have you read this carefully? If so, to be entered to win a prize at the April practice meeting, you may respond to the newsletter email with "Spring Showers" in the subject line.

Join us at our next Practice Meeting!

2025 Quarterly Practice Meeting Dates

SOUTHERN NEVADA

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2025

All Southern Nevada Practice meetings will be held at Summerlin Hospital and begin at 11:30 am. Lunch is served.



NORTHERN NEVADA

Thursday, May 1, 2025 (at Carson Tahoe Medical Center)

Thursday, July 31, 2025

Thursday, Nov. 6, 2025

Northern Nevada Practice Meetings will be held at Northern Nevada Sparks Medical Building, Suite 201. (**Unless otherwise noted**)
Meet & Greet begins at 5 pm; Meeting begins at 5:30.

SILVER STATE ACO Compliance Line

702-751-0834

Available for secure reporting of any suspected compliance issues, without fear of retribution.



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