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NEW PHYSICIAN BILLING REVIEW PROCESS TO PROMOTE FAIRNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY

The McGuinty government has updated the way physicians' Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) billings are reviewed to promote accountability to patients, doctors and the government. Working with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), the government appointed The Hon. Peter Cory, a retired Supreme Court of Canada Justice, to identify best practices for future reviews of fee-for-service payments to physicians. The proposed new system is based on Mr. Cory's report.

The new medical audit system will have four phases: education, payment review, review by a new board, and an appeal process. The process will emphasize educating and assisting physicians about correct billing and provide additional opportunities for them to respond to Ministry concerns about their billings.

Phase 1: Education

- One-on-one education on accurate claims submissions for physicians;
- Continuation of ongoing Ministry and OMA education about correct OHIP billing procedures through OHIP bulletins to physicians, Interpretive Bulletins published in the Ontario Medical Review, seminars and other physician education programs.

Phase 2: OHIP Payment Review Program (OPRP):

- The OPRP will be continued for any additional review that is required following educational interventions. An audit will be conducted by the ministry in a fair and open way that involves the physician. This process and/or further education may resolve the billing concerns.

Phase 3: New Review Board

- The Physician Payment Review Board will have the power to conduct formal hearings of cases that have not been resolved through the education and OPRP phases and that are referred to it by OHIP or requested by a physician;
- A hearing panel of the review board will consist of three physicians and one public member;
- The ministry and the physician will have a right of appeal from orders of the Board.

Phase 4: Appeal

- Appeals may be made directly to the Divisional Court.

The proposed legislation will also establish the Joint Committee on the Schedule of Benefits. This committee will help resolve billing matters before they reach the Physician Payment Review Board by providing its opinion on the interpretation of any of the provisions of the Schedule of Benefits.

Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

David Jensen
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

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