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6 Changes Coming to the Health Care and Medical Industries in 2022

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A new year typically brings some new procedures that affect health care professionals and patients. Here are six upcoming changes to anticipate in 2022.



1. Better Access to Medical Care for U.S. Residents

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has put forth a series of provisions that would build on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) if they come into effect as scheduled in 2022. These alterations could help more United States residents secure health care coverage.

Two of the changes relate to expanding open enrollment opportunities for qualifying parties. More specifically, the period would get lengthened by 30 days in 2022 for everyone. Another proposed change relates to creating a dedicated open enrollment timeframe for low-income residents.

2. A Proposed Artificial Intelligence Framework for Europe

Artificial intelligence (AI) has abundant potential in the medical sector. For example, one AI application shows physical therapists which movements pose the most challenges for patients recovering from strokes. However, people interested in AI warn it's crucial to use the technology responsibly.

The European Commission has proposed a risk-based approach for what could become the first legal framework for artificial intelligence. It could come into effect during the second half of 2022. This progress does not only affect the health

care sector. However, since it details procedures for high-risk AI applications, medical professionals must stay aware of what develops.

3. Possible Changes for Medicare's Physician Fee Schedule Affecting Radiologists

The CMS recently released its proposed rule changes for the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS). Further alterations will likely occur before the organization finalizes what's new. However, the proposals give a glimpse of what to expect. Some of the 2022 updates affect particular specialty services in radiology.

The MPFS determines the physician reimbursement amounts for specific treatment. In 2022, there may be an estimated 9% decrease in interventional radiology and a 2% decrease in diagnostic radiology reimbursements. Additionally, the CMS proposes a 5% decrease in radiation therapy centers for people with cancer. However, interventions from Congress could curb some of these payment cuts.

4. Provisions to Lower Out-of-Pocket Consumer Medical Costs

The high costs that patients face for medical care often make them delay or avoid seeking medical advice. However, the CMS set out new rules for 2022 that should make the expenses more manageable.

One proposal concerns a $400 reduction in the maximum amount of out-of-pocket costs Americans could pay. The CMS will also introduce related measures that make health care coverage more affordable and allow people 30 and over to apply for catastrophic coverage through low-priced plans that protect individuals from high medical bills.

5. The No Surprises Act Coming Into Effect for Americans

Another improvement set to influence American health care coverage in 2022 is the No Surprises Act. That legislation applies to almost all scenarios where patients could incur unexpectedly high medical bills due to getting out-of-network care.

As of January 1, 2022, it will be illegal for health providers to bill patients for amounts higher than the in-network cost-sharing amounts when those individuals receive out-of-network care. When billing for those services, health plan providers must treat out-of-network services as in-network ones. The notable exception to this new rule involves ground ambulance transportation.

6. Companies Must Meet New European Medical Device Regulations

The European Union has a new medical device law coming into effect in 2022 that will inevitably affect companies that serve people in that region and could impact elsewhere in the world if other areas make similar changes. The In-vitro Diagnostics Regulation (IVDR) classifies relevant devices into four risk-based categories. Each group then has associated regulations and assessment methods.

However, the upcoming rules do not apply to diagnostic medical devices manufactured within and solely used by a particular medical organization. There are also new associated parameters within the IVDR for clinical trials and evaluations of affected products.

Staying Informed Makes Upcoming Changes More Manageable

Many changes in the health care sector and other industries require preparation to ensure smooth transitions. Remaining up-to-date about what may change soon and what's already confirmed is essential for anyone working in the medical field. Anticipating the future makes organizations and individuals more adaptable.