



4700 W. Lake Avenue
Glenview, IL 60025-1485
847/375-4731 Fax 877/734-8750
e-mail: aapm@amctec.com
Web site: www.painmed.org

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Contact: Sabrina Kinckle
847/375-4731

AAPM Triumphs in Taxonomy of Pain Medicine

Glenview, IL – August 16, 2004 – Through the persistent efforts of the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM), “pain management” has been changed to “pain medicine” in the taxonomy of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and National Uniform Claim Committee (NUCC).

“Any brief description belittles the heroic efforts expended to achieve this goal,” says Philipp M. Lippe, M.D., AAPM Executive Medical Director. “This accomplishment is reminiscent of achieving American Medical Association recognition of AAPM, recognition by the medical boards of California, Florida, and Texas of the American Board of Pain Medicine and the establishment of the Decade of Pain Control and Research.”

For nearly a decade, AAPM actively campaigned to add –“pain medicine” to the CMS taxonomy for specialties. AAPM representatives repeatedly visited the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), now CMS. A partial victory was achieved several years ago when HCFA established code 72 for “pain management”. Additionally, AAPM has effectively blocked attempts to change the taxonomy for this code to “interventional pain management”. [NB Code 09 was established for this purpose.]

AAPM’s work with NUCC, an agency that had been working to establish a broad taxonomy of health care for the private sector, resulted in NUCC’s adoption of multiple designators for pain care including “pain medicine”.

The codes for Pain Medicine specialists have not been changed and there are no payment implications in this change.

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