



Department of Medical Assistance Services
600 East Broad Street, Suite 1300
Richmond, Virginia 23219

<http://www.dmas.virginia.gov>

MEDICAID MEMO

TO: All Providers participating in the Virginia Medical Assistance, FAMIS, and SLH Programs and Managed Care Organizations providing services to Virginia Medicaid and FAMIS recipients

FROM: Patrick W. Finnerty, Director
Department of Medical Assistance Services

MEMO Special

DATE 8/20/2004

SUBJECT: Use of Electronic Signatures

The purpose of this memo is to clarify the Department of Medical Assistance Services' (DMAS) policy on the use of electronic signatures for clinical documentation purposes. Failure to properly maintain or authenticate medical records (sign and date the entry) may result in the retraction of Medicaid payments. An electronic signature that meets the following criteria is acceptable for clinical documentation:

- identifies the individual signing the document by name and title;
- assures that the documentation cannot be altered after the signature has been affixed by limiting access to the code or key sequence; and
- provides for nonrepudiation; that is, strong and substantial evidence that will make it difficult for the signer to claim that the electronic representation is not valid.

Use of the electronic signatures, for clinical documentation purposes, shall be deemed to constitute a signature and will have the same effect as a written signature on a document.

Providers must have written policies and procedures in effect regarding use of electronic signatures. In addition to complying with security policies and procedures, providers who use computer keys or electronic signatures, must sign a statement assuring that they alone will have access to and use the key or computer password. The policies and procedures and statements of exclusive use must be maintained and available at the provider's location.

Additionally, the use of electronic signatures must be consistent with the applicable accrediting and licensing authorities and the provider's own internal policies. These requirements for clinical documentation apply only to Medicaid claims, and do not preclude other state or federal requirements.

An original written signature is still required on provider enrollment forms and for medical consents. This clarification does not apply to electronic claims submission or the electronic sharing or transmission of clinical records. For guidance on billing, please refer to Chapter V of your provider manual.

ELIGIBILITY AND CLAIMS STATUS INFORMATION

DMAS offers a web-based Internet option to access information regarding Medicaid eligibility, claims status, check status, service limits, prior authorization, and pharmacy prescriber identification information. The website address to use to enroll for access to this system is <http://virginia.fhsc.com>. The MediCall voice response system will provide the same information and can be accessed by calling 800-884-9730 or 800-772-9996. Both options are available at no cost to the provider.

COPIES OF MANUALS

DMAS publishes electronic and printable copies of its provider manuals and Medicaid Memoranda on the DMAS website at www.dmas.virginia.gov (*please note the new website address*). Refer to the Provider Column to find Medicaid and SLH provider manuals or click on "Medicaid Memos to Providers" to view Medicaid Memoranda. The Internet is the most efficient means to receive and review current provider information. If you do not have access to the Internet, or would like a paper copy of a manual, you can order these by contacting Commonwealth-Martin at 804-780-0076. A fee will be charged for the printing and mailing of the manuals and manual updates requested.

"HELPLINE"

The "HELPLINE" is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except State holidays, to answer questions. The "HELPLINE" numbers are:

786-6273	Richmond area
1-800-552-8627	All other areas

Please remember that the "HELPLINE" is for provider use only.