

**Administrative Office: 805 / 484 - 6822**

**www.venturamedical.org**

**November 2, 2015**

## **ICD-10 IS HERE: CMA PUBLISHES NEW FAQ TO HELP MEMBERS SURVIVE THE CHANGEOVER**

After much debate and years of delay, the October 1 implementation date for ICD-10 has finally arrived. While concerns remain about industry preparedness for this monumental transition, the full impact of the ICD-10 conversion will likely not be felt for several weeks or until the first payment remittances are received.

In an effort to help practices navigate the transition, the California Medical Association (CMA) has published a new FAQ titled, "Surviving ICD-10: An FAQ for physician practices." This members-only resource is available free to CMA members at [www.cmanet.org/icd10](http://www.cmanet.org/icd10).

Other ICD-10 resources available to members include:

- CMA's ICD-10 Transition Guide: What physicians need to know
- Discounted ICD-10 education and training
- ICD-10 Overview webinar (on-demand)
- ICD-10 news alerts
- One-on-one assistance through our reimbursement helpline at (888) 401-5911 or [economicservices@cmanet.org](mailto:economicservices@cmanet.org).

For more details, see CMA's ICD-10 webpage at [www.cmanet.org/icd10](http://www.cmanet.org/icd10).

Contact: CMA's reimbursement helpline, (888) 401-5911 or [economicservices@cmanet.org](mailto:economicservices@cmanet.org).

## **STATE TEMPORARILY LIFTS RESTRICTION ON USE OF FLU VACCINE CONTAINING THIMEROSAL FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN**

Because of limited vaccine supplies and the danger posed by widespread influenza activity in California, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has temporarily suspended a state law that prohibits the use of flu vaccine containing thimerosal on pregnant women and children under the age of 3. State law allows CDPH to issue such exemptions when there are insufficient supplies of thimerosal-free influenza vaccine. The

exemption will remain in effect until December 31, 2015.

During this exemption period, physicians should prioritize any remaining supplies of thimerosal-free vaccine for young children and pregnant women when feasible, as long as prioritization does not prevent the immunization of others.

The California Medical Association urged CDPH to issue the exemption to help protect young children and pregnant women at high-risk for severe influenza complications.

For more information regarding the exemption, please review CDPH's letter to interested parties.

Questions on the exemption should be directed to the CDPH Immunization Branch at (510) 620-3737.

### **VCMA Installation Gala**

*Honoring Incoming VCMA President*

*Jeffery Davies, DO*

*and the 2016 Board of Directors*

Thursday, November 5

Wedgewood at The Tower Club

300 Esplanade Drive, Oxnard

6-7pm Exhibitor Reception

7pm Buffet Dinner & Installation Program

Keynote Speaker: Francisco Silva, CMA General Counsel and Vice President will share updates of the CMA-VCMA victories in the courts, legislature and health plans, as well as the challenges and strategies for 2016.

RSVP: [julie@venturamedical.org](mailto:julie@venturamedical.org)

## **CMA PASSES RESOLUTION URGING U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO CEASE TOBACCO ADVOCACY EFFORTS**

CMA reinforced its long-established stance against tobacco use, with the CMA House of Delegates voting in favor of a resolution (Res. 107-15) that strongly objects to pro-tobacco efforts by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in other parts of the world.

With the resolution's passage, CMA calls on the Chamber to immediately halt all advocacy efforts on behalf of tobacco

companies and urges all conscientious companies that are members of the Chamber to either take similar action or quit their membership to protest such anti-health efforts.

Tobacco use is the cause of almost 6 million deaths worldwide each year, and will cause more than 8 million deaths annually by 2030, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. On average, people who smoke die 10 years earlier than those who don't.

This resolution comes at a time when CMA—as part of the Save Lives California Coalition—is seeking to reduce those numbers by implementing a needed \$2 per pack tax increase on cigarettes sold in California—a concept that's already gained an overwhelming number of supporters across political party lines. A Field Poll released in August showed two-thirds of those surveyed support such a measure.

Currently, California's cigarette tax is among the lowest in the nation, at 87 cents per pack. California is also the only state in the country, besides Missouri, that hasn't raised its cigarette tax in the past 17 years.

## **STATE ISSUES REPORT CARDS FOR HMOs, PPOs AND LARGE MEDICAL GROUPS**

The California Office of the Patient Advocate (OPA) recently released its 15th annual "California Health Care Quality Report Cards," which rates the state's health plans and medical groups on a four-star scale.

Available in English, Spanish and Chinese, the report cards allow consumers to compare the quality of care that more than 16 million commercially insured consumers receive from the state's 10 largest HMOs, six largest PPOs and more than 200 medical groups. The data for the report cards is drawn from claims data and patient surveys from 2013.

Users can drill-down online to see specific plan performance on topics of greatest interest to them, such as chronic disease management, pediatric care and mental health care.

The report cards have been released to coincide with the fall open enrollment period for many Californians and their

families, including those purchasing coverage through Covered California, the state's health benefit exchange. Covered California's next open enrollment period runs from November 1, 2015, to January 31, 2016. The report cards are part of a larger national push to bring greater transparency to the health care industry and help consumers choose services that best fit their needs.

The report cards are available at [www.opa.ca.gov/pages/reportcard.aspx](http://www.opa.ca.gov/pages/reportcard.aspx)

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## RENEWING LICENSEES: AVOID UNNECESSARY DELAYS

The Medical Board of California is asking physicians who need to renew their medical licenses in the next few months to do so early to avoid delays associated with scheduled upgrades to the BreEZe online licensing system.

During the upgrades, the Department of Consumer Affairs will be transitioning additional boards and bureaus to BreEZe. This will require a temporary shutdown of all licensing processes for several business days, and could result in delays in processing initial license applications, license renewals, and name or address changes.

Licenses expire on the last day of the licensee's birth month during the second year of a two-year term. Renewal notices are sent out 90 days in advance of the expiration date. Individuals holding a professional license with Dec. 2015 or Jan. 2016 expiration dates who wish to renew their licenses are strongly encouraged to renew as early as possible, preferably before the end of Nov. 2015.

The online renewal system is the fastest way to renew a license. If you are completing your renewal application online, the medical board recommends that you verify your license status on the medical board website ([www.mbc.ca.gov](http://www.mbc.ca.gov)) seven days after you complete the online renewal. If it appears that your license has not been renewed, please contact the medical board's information technology help desk at (916) 263-2205 for assistance.

If completing renewals by mail, please allow four to six weeks for the renewal to be processed, including update of the physician's license status on the medical board website.

Questions should be directed to the medical board at (916) 263-2382 or [webmaster@mbc.ca.gov](mailto:webmaster@mbc.ca.gov).

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

For more information go to Calendar Tab at [venturamedical.org](http://venturamedical.org)

**November 5 – VCMA Gala Installation** for incoming 2016 President, Jeff Davies, DO Tower Club Oxnard. RSVP 805/484-6822

**December 5 & 12 – AAPC CPC Exam for Staff** 8am-5pm each day, VCMA Conference Room, [www.aapc.com](http://www.aapc.com) to register.

**December 9 & 16 – Professionalism in the Medical Office, 2 Part Practical Training Sessions for Staff** 8:30-10am each day, VCMA Conference Room, \$75 pp.

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## CLASSIFIEDS

Free listings for VCMA members. Submit ad info to: [marycarr@venturamedical.org](mailto:marycarr@venturamedical.org)

## EQUIPMENT

Exam table for sale. Contact Connie for more information at 648-2504.

## PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES

**Camarillo** - Office with two to three exam rooms to share. Part time or full time. Affordable and flexible. Please contact [805-383-2929](tel:805-383-2929).

**Thousand Oaks** - Sublease up to 4 days per week; 7 exam rooms in prof. bldg. Please call Lynn at 805-482-8989

**Thousand Oaks** - 2700 SF office with large procedure room and recovery area, and 4 exam rooms. Available Mondays and Tuesdays 8 AM to 12 noon; Wednesdays 2 to 6 PM. More info, visit [www.AGImedical.com](http://www.AGImedical.com)

**Ventura** – For Lease: 500 sq.ft. Beautiful medical office on Brent St. available January 1, 2016. 805/258-2059 ext.2447 for info.

**Westlake Village** – Remodeled, medical office for sublease. Available up to four days a week. (818)438-5997 [Brisbeee@aol.com](mailto:Brisbeee@aol.com)

**Fall Prevention Education and Services**  
Goal is to decrease repeated falls in elderly residents: fall prevention; patient evaluation in the hospitals, to a home evaluation, for safety improvement (depending on the outcome of the victim's ultimate morbidity).

Also free evidence based patient classes: Tai Chi, Stepping On, Walk with Ease, Matter of Balance. [Monique.Nowlin@ventura.org](mailto:Monique.Nowlin@ventura.org) for patient referrals.

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## CMA Reimbursement Helpline

To access the Center for Economic Services, health plan hassles, contract reviews...

**888/401-5911**

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## MEMBER BENEFITS HI-LIGHTS

### Insurance Programs

Call a Mercer Client Advisor at (800) 842-3761 or [cmacounty.insurance.service@mercer.com](mailto:cmacounty.insurance.service@mercer.com)

**Merchant Credit Card program** lower your current fees, complimentary machines for VCMA members (\$300 savings) and upgrade software to meet EMV 2015 compliance requirements. **800/400-0206**. Select option 2.

**Broadcast Email Service:** Email .pdf to [marycarr@venturamedical.org](mailto:marycarr@venturamedical.org) Accessible one time each year per member.

**Health Plan Contract Analysis:** Professional Resources Tab; scroll to Legal Services. [www.cmanet.org](http://www.cmanet.org)

**Physicians Legal Handbook** search over 1500 titles; legal opinions, sample letters and current law/court references. [www.cmanet.org](http://www.cmanet.org)

**Professional Liability:** The Doctors Company has been endorsed by VCMA for the past 10 years. Contact: [MLawrence@thedoctors.com](mailto:MLawrence@thedoctors.com) for quote or questions.

**Online CME:** new online CME platform from CMA's Institute for Medical Quality (IMQ) provides access to AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™. Easy tracking of course participation and credit. Discounts for CMA members. Catalog and register for courses at <http://imq.inreachce.com>.

**Car Rentals:** save up to 25 percent on car rentals from [Avis](http://Avis.com) and [Hertz](http://Hertz.com). Tell them you're a CMA member, they will confirm eligibility.

For more benefits and details, go to [www.cmanet.org](http://www.cmanet.org) and log-in using your email, update your Member Profile. Or visit [www.venturamedical.org](http://www.venturamedical.org)

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## CMA PUBLISHES FAQ ON NEW SCHOOL VACCINATION LAW

On June 30, 2015, California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Senate Bill 277, sponsored by the California Medical Association, which eliminates the personal belief exemption from school vaccination requirements, barring parents from skipping their children's school-required immunizations unless they have a medical exemption from a physician.

CMA, along with the American Academy of Pediatrics, California, and the California Academy of Family Physicians, has developed an FAQ that provides information on what physicians need to know about SB 277 and vaccination laws. The FAQ is available free in CMA's online resource library. Click here to download the FAQ.

## **CMS ISSUES FINAL 2016 MEDICARE PAYMENT RULE; INCLUDES REIMBURSEMENT FOR END-OF-LIFE DISCUSSIONS**

On Friday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the final 2016 Medicare physician fee schedule. One of the biggest changes in the CMS proposal is the assignment of codes to pay physicians for end-of-life consultations.

Key policies finalized in the 2016 payment rule include:

**Advanced care planning:** The final fee schedule includes two CPT codes to reimburse for advance care planning. Compensating health care professionals for time spent with patients discussing treatment wishes and goals of care is a critical step forward in honoring patient treatment preferences, particularly for those nearing the end of life.

**Physician payments:** The final rule includes a 0.5 percent overall increase in Medicare reimbursement in 2016 for all providers.

**Merit-Based Incentive Payment System:** In the final rule, CMS has made changes necessary to begin implementation of the new Merit-Based Incentive Payment System for physicians and other practitioners, which will fully take effect in 2019.

## Upcoming CMA webinars

**Nov. 18: IQCP: The New Quality Control Option: What Physicians with Office Labs Need to Know:** The implementation deadline for the new Individualized Quality Control Plan (IQCP) law is January 1, 2016. This webinar will help physicians and their lab managers to prepare for IQCP. Topics include:

- The principles of the new quality control approach;
- The steps to create your individualized quality control plan; and
- How to monitor its effectiveness to ensure compliance with federal CLIA and state laws.

Contact: CMA's member help center, (800) 786-4262 or [memberservice@cmanet.org](mailto:memberservice@cmanet.org)

**Dec. 2: Medicare 2016: New Rules, Policies and Procedures:** This webinar will provide information on the 2016 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule and associated rules for Medicare services. The FY 2016 rule marks the transition away from fee-for-service and toward value-based payment in the Medicare system with an eye on the entire health care system. We will review any continuing or new programs that may negatively impact payments, as well as prepare you for revisions to policies that may impact your billing and reimbursement. These include PQRS and Value Based Modifier changes that will affect physician practices during 2016 and beyond. Be prepared to implement any Medicare billing and coverage changes that apply to your practice.

**Dec.16: Meaningful Use: 2015 and 2016 Modified Rules:** This webinar will cover the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Service's recent changes to the Electronic Health Record Incentive Program, with a focus on 2015 and 2016 meaningful use. If you don't achieve meaningful use, you may be subject to payment adjustments—adjustments that have not been modified in this recent final rule making. This presentation will help you to assess whether you have met meaningful use for program year 2015 and will help you to prepare to meet meaningful use in 2016.