

Module 2: Communications

2.1 Health Insurance BC and the Ministry of Health

Health Insurance BC administers MSP and PharmaCare operations through the management of program information, claims and contact centre services. The Ministry of Health sets policy, establishes standards and monitors HIBC performance to ensure that it meets contractual requirements

- 2.3 Contact Numbers
- 2.3 MSP Web site
 - Forms and Publications
- 2.3 Guidelines and Protocols

2.2 MSP Contacts

Mail

Medical Services Plan
PO Box 9480, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E7

Telephone

Vancouver: 604 456-6950
Other areas of B.C. (toll-free) 1 866 456-6950

Information-by-Fax Service

Using a touch tone phone, select a publication and enter your fax number. The system will then fax the selection to you. This includes publications, forms, information on close-off dates, payment schedule and fee item information, and RSA/NITA programs.

Telephone: 250 356-9605

Teleplan Support Centre

Use this toll-free service to reach the Teleplan Support Centre about electronic billing problems, liaison with software vendors, electronic remittance statements and refusals, resetting of passwords and assistance with technical problems.

Vancouver: 604 456-6950
Other areas of B.C. (toll-free): 1 866 456-6950

Coverage Enquiries

This automated service handles coverage enquiries using an interactive voice response (IVR) system. The patient's personal health number (PHN) must be provided. (If the PHN is unknown, fax a request on a coverage research form to 250 405-3592.)

Victoria: 250 952-3102 or 250 383-1226
Vancouver: 604 669-6667
Other areas of B.C. (toll-free): 1 800 742-6165

Claim Services

Central access point for information on claims, payments, patient status, third party payments, registration, billing, locum and rural programs, out of country claims, and info-by-fax. Includes the Billing Support, Benefit Services, Provider Services and Out of Country Claims departments.

When calling, please have the appropriate information ready (e.g. patient name and PHN, data centre/sequence number, date of service, practitioner number, payment number). Listen carefully to the prompts so that your call can be correctly directed to the right department.

Vancouver: 604 456-6950
Other areas of B.C. (toll-free): 1 866 456-6950

Practitioner and Patient Services Claims Support
Fax: 250 405-3593

Assists with billing, reconciliation and billing problems, payment schedule/fee item questions; handles adjudication disputes.

Handles pay-patient claims, benefits entitlement, answers benefits queries, over age claims, responds to public and third party claims information requests.

Provider Programs
Fax: 250 405-3592

Responsible for practitioner registration, opting-in/out, assignment of payment, electronic claims submission, direct bank deposit, locum programs, northern and rural programs, physician outreach program.

Out of Country Claims

Fax: 250 405-3588
Handles payment of claims for medical services provided outside Canada, referrals for services obtained outside B.C.

Alternative Payments Program

Administers alternative payment arrangements for physicians.

Telephone: 250 952-3200
Fax: 250 952-3486

Billing Integrity Program

Monitors, audits and investigates the billing patterns of medical and health care practitioners.

Telephone: 250 952-2829
E-mail: hlth.bip@gov.bc.ca

Publication Services

Produces publications, education materials and corporate communications for the Medical Services Division and the Medical Services Commission.

Telephone: 250 952-1059
Fax: 250 952-3133

Guidelines and Protocols Program

In BC guidelines and protocols are developed under the direction of the Guidelines and Protocols Advisory Committee (GPAC), an advisory committee of the Medical Services Commission. Guidelines and protocols are written by practicing physicians and are jointly approved by the B.C. Medical Association and the Ministry of Health Services. GPAC provides doctors and patients with recommendations for medical care to help ensure that patients receive the best quality health care. Guidelines and protocols help doctors identify the tests, treatments or procedures that are most appropriate for common situations.

GPAC intends its guidelines to provide practical and easy-to-follow advice to practitioners for effective patient care. The guidelines are based on scientific evidence, and are modified for circumstances in B.C. GPAC aims to:

- * Encourage appropriate responses to common medical situations
- * Recommend actions that are sufficient and efficient, neither excessive nor deficient
- * Permit exceptions when justified by clinical circumstances

Guidelines and Protocols Advisory Committee

PO Box 9642 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC V8W 9P1

Telephone: 250 952-1347
Fax: 250 952-1417
E-mail: hlth.guidelines@gov.bc.ca

2.3 MSP WEB SITE

- Publications and Forms

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/index.html>

MSP is constantly adding features and services to make our web site interesting and convenient for physicians and their office staff.

Some of the features of the site that you may find useful include:

MSP Forms for Medical and Health Care Practitioners

Including application forms for: registration, MSP billing number, Teleplan service, direct bank payment, assignment of payment, and insured out of country medical services. Forms can be downloaded and printed for completion and mailing. No need to fax or phone in your request for forms anymore!

Billing Procedures for Physicians

From here you can view and print sections of the *MSP Resource Manual for Physicians*, including billing procedures for General Practice and Specialty services.

Guidelines and Protocols

From this site you can view and print a complete listing of available protocols and guidelines. You will also find a list of guidelines under development, patient information guides and the process for guideline development. Guidelines are available online in PDF and in HTML format at www.BCGuidelines.ca and in PDA format at <http://www.clinipearls.ca/BCGuidelines/>

MSC Payment Schedule and Explanatory Codes

The *MSC Payment Schedule* and Explanatory Codes are online and include a search function for finding items by numerical fee code or text.

Physician's Newsletter

We have gone green! Effective summer 2009 editions of the Physicians' Newsletter will only be posted to this website (no more mail outs) and you will be notified when a new edition is available via our broadcast messaging system. Please keep us bookmarked under your favorites for ease in locating future editions of the newsletter. (www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/infoprac/physnews/index.html)

We also offer an email notification service if you wish to be advised when new MSP publications are posted to our site. It only takes a moment to register and can be easily done by visiting our site at www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/listserv/index.html

This change has been made in keeping with Government's commitment to reduce our carbon footprint and paper consumption. .

Misplaced your recent or past issue(s) of the *Physician's Newsletter*? Past issues of the newsletter are also online. All you need is Acrobat Reader – a free downloadable program from Adobe. Simply click on the yellow Adobe Acrobat icon found in our web site.

Diagnostic Code Descriptions (ICD9's)

MSP's Index and Guide to 3-Digit and 4-Digit Diagnostic Code descriptions are listed by section – the site includes an index and additional codes that are used by MSP only.

MSC Financial Statement (Bluebook)

The MSC Financial Statement for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2008 is now posted through our MSP Publications page at:

http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/msp/financial_statement.html

Two versions are available; one is easy to search, the other is an Adobe Acrobat PDF version that will print out exactly like the publication. It doesn't get any easier!

MSP Fee-for-Service Payment Statistics

Each year MSP produces three booklets that provide practitioner and subscriber fee-for-service based statistics for the current year. You can find these documents by going to our "Facts and Statistics" page at: <http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/msp/publications.html>

MSP Tutor

MSPTutor is a series of on-line self-directed learning modules for physicians and medical office assistants (MOA's). This exciting MSP service is available on the MSP web site at: <http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/msp/msptutor/index.html>

MSP Tutor is designed to help medical offices understand and follow MSP claims billing procedures and rules so that their claims will be processed as accurately and quickly as possible. This easy-to-use tutorial package is broken up into short modules that focus on specific billing rules. Each module includes a short quiz that enables users to test their knowledge on a specific topic.

MSP Tutor is featured in a site specific to medical practitioners where the *MSC Payment Schedule*, parts of the *Physician's Resource Manual*, and the *MSP Physician's Newsletter* can be found. Please note that we have used these existing modules to assist in creating the MOA Billing Seminar Modules.

For information on MSP Tutor please contact: dianne.kirkpatrick@gov.bc.ca or telephone 250 952-1059.

2.4 Guidelines and Protocols

<http://bcguidelines.ca/>

Clinical Practice Guidelines and Protocols in British Columbia

Clinicians in Canada and other countries increasingly use practice guidelines and protocols to improve patient care and health outcomes. Guidelines and protocols help practitioners offer the best possible care for their patients by providing recommendations based on scientific evidence and expert clinical opinion.

In B.C., guidelines and protocols are developed under the direction of the Guidelines and Protocols Advisory Committee (GPAC), an advisory committee of the Medical Services Commission. Guidelines and protocols are written by practising physicians and are jointly approved by the B.C. Medical Association and the Ministry of Health Services. GPAC provides doctors and patients with recommendations for medical care to help ensure that patients receive the best quality health. Guidelines and protocols help doctors identify the tests, treatments or procedures that are most appropriate for common situations.

Guidelines are available online in PDF and in HTML format at www.BCGuidelines.ca and in PDA format at <http://www.clinipearls.ca/BCGuidelines/>

GPAC intends its guidelines to provide practical and easy-to-follow advice to practitioners for effective patient care. The guidelines are based on scientific evidence, and are modified for circumstances in B.C. GPAC aims to:

- * Encourage appropriate responses to common medical situations
- * Recommend actions that are sufficient and efficient, neither excessive nor deficient
- * Permit exceptions when justified by clinical circumstances

Guideline and Protocol Development Process

Principles

The Guidelines and Protocols Advisory Committee (GPAC) adheres to the following principles:

- To encourage appropriate responses to common medical situations
- To recommend actions that are sufficient and efficient, neither excessive nor deficient
- To permit exceptions when justified by clinical circumstances

Guidelines and protocols are designed to apply to common conditions and to provide flexibility for physician judgement in uncommon situations. They aim to improve patient care by developing recommendations for clinical practice in B.C.

Selection Criteria

- high volume or high cost

- high variability in practice patterns
- opportunity for improvement in practice
- support and interest of physicians

Process

GPAC's Subcommittees and Working Groups develop guidelines through an iterative process that involves:

- Topic choice (common condition, situation can be improved by a guideline, doctors interested) and scope definition
- Literature search (previous guidelines, critical literature reviews, randomized controlled trials)
- Consultation with experts
- Guideline drafts
- External review (random sample of general practitioners, random sample of relevant specialists, experts in the field, professional organizations)
- Consultation with experts
- Approvals (from B.C. Medical Association, Medical Services Commission)
- Three to five year planned review (may occur earlier when prompted by new information)
- Guideline evaluation

Review

All guidelines and protocols are scheduled for review in the light of recent scientific literature three to five years after their initial distribution. They are reviewed sooner if warranted by new information.

Disclaimer

The Clinical Practice Guidelines (the "Guidelines") have been developed by the Guidelines and Protocols Advisory Committee on behalf of the Medical Services Commission. The Guidelines are intended to give an understanding of a clinical problem, and outline one or more preferred approaches to the investigation and management of the problem. The Guidelines are not intended as a substitute for the advice or professional judgment of a health care professional, nor are they intended to be the only approach to the management of clinical problems.