

Bulletin



Bulletin Number	Date	Direct inquiries to
4453	July 12, 2007	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Processing Sites
Distribution		(address below)
Physicians, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories		

Subject: Random Verification Letters

Occasionally, a patient may bring a random verification letter in to their service provider to discuss it. This bulletin provides information that you can use to discuss the letter with your patients as well as providing an overview of the program.

Background Information

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) pays out approximately \$8 billion dollars in a year. In excess of a hundred million individual claims are submitted for payment to OHIP by a variety of health professionals who provide insured services, including physicians and other members of regulated professions. The random verification letter program is one measure of accountability for these expenditures.

The verification letter program sends randomly generated letters to individual patients. These letters are used to confirm that insured health services were received from a particular health care provider on a specific date. If the patient cannot verify that a service was provided, a letter may be sent to the physician requesting medical records and/or additional information concerning this service. The random letters are generated from all the claims that are submitted, and do not specifically target any provider or patient.

The objectives of the verification letter program include:

- Deterring the submission of fraudulent and inappropriate claims by providers
- Confirming that services were performed for the claims submitted
- Through follow-up, to assist physicians in billing correctly

.../2

Processing Sites			
Hamilton 119 King Street West, 10 th Floor P.O. Box 2280, Stn A L8P 4Y7	Kingston 1055 Princess Street, Suite 401 P.O. Box 9000 K7L 5A9	London 217 York Street, 5 th Floor Station A N6A 5P9	Mississauga 201 City Centre Drive Suite 300 L5B 2T4
Oshawa Executive Tower, Oshawa Centre 419 King Street West P.O. Box 635 L1J 7J2	Ottawa Fuller Building 75 Albert Street K1P 5Y9	Sudbury 199 Larch Street Suite 801 P3E 5R1	Toronto 47 Sheppard Avenue East Suite 505 M2N 7E7

Applicable Legislation

The *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA) governs the ministry's collection, use and disclosure of personal health information. The MOHLTC is permitted, under subsection 37(1)(i) of the PHIPA, to use personal health information about an individual, for the purpose of monitoring and verifying claims for payment for the provision of health care or related goods and services.

Impact on Patients

The verification letter includes information that qualifies as “personal health information” as that term is defined in PHIPA. Accordingly, the letter clearly indicates that individuals are not required to provide their personal health information to the ministry by completing and returning the letter. The letter requests the patient to reply only when either the patient thinks a service was not provided on the identified date or the patient is unsure.

Historically, in the vast majority of cases the service is verified and no further action is taken. In a small number of cases, further investigation is warranted and records may be requested to verify that the service was delivered as claimed. The ministry recognizes that patients return the letter for a number of reasons (e.g., misunderstanding, language barrier, poor recall, etc.); therefore in order to resolve any question regarding the service being verified, the definitive source is the physician record.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the verification letter program, please contact 1-888-855-6679.