Equitable Reimbursement for Midwifery Services - Health Care Reform Law (111-148)

Background: Section 3114 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act corrects long-standing reimbursement disparities for midwifery services under the Medicare program. The provision also ensures that women will have greater access to the essential maternity and primary care services provided by certified nurse-midwives.

Summary of Provision

Effective January 1, 2011, payment rates for certified nurse-midwives for covered professional services under Medicare Part B are increased from 65% of the fee schedule to 100%—equal to what a physician bills for identical services.

Section 3114 of the statute, “Improved Access for Certified Nurse-Midwife Services,” will be implemented and enforced by The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The new legislation remedies persistent reimbursement inequalities in the profession and encourages state Medicaid plans and third-party payers to follow suit. Because many Medicaid programs and private insurers follow Medicare reimbursement rates, this provision could trigger a ripple effect of improved reimbursement for midwifery services.

References: