



Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Atlanta Regional Office
61 Forsyth St., SW; Suite 4T20
Atlanta, GA 30303

May 19, 2016

TO: Providers
SUBJECT: Prohibition on Balance Billing of Healthy Connections Prime Members

BALANCE BILLING IS PROHIBITED

Balance billing is the practice in which providers bill dually eligible beneficiaries enrolled in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program for Medicare cost-sharing. This population is exempt from paying any cost-sharing for deductibles, coinsurance and co-payments related to Medicare services and prescription drugs. Healthy Connections Prime Members are considered QMBs. Please be advised that it is **unlawful for providers to “balance bill” any patient who is a member of Healthy Connections Prime** for any covered services. Balance billing for Healthy Connections Prime members is billing the patients for the difference between what the Medicare-Medicaid plan (MMP) pays and the retail price you charge for your services. The provider must accept payment in full from the Medicare-Medicaid plan (MMP) and should not deny any services to members for non-payment. Providers who inappropriately balance bill Healthy Connections Prime members are subject to sanctions and/or termination of their MMP provider agreement.

WHAT CAN BE BILLED TO MEMBERS?

1. For non-covered items and services, providers must give members advance notice that such items or services will be non-covered and have a written agreement with the members for these non-covered items or services. If such notice is not given and the agreement is not in place, providers may not bill members for such items or services.
2. For certain Medicaid-only items and services (such as durable medical equipment and home health agency care), members can be billed the allowable Medicaid co-pays.

ABOUT HEALTHY CONNECTIONS PRIME

Healthy Connections Prime is a new option for South Carolina seniors 65 and older with Medicare and Healthy Connections Medicaid. It is part of a national initiative designed to integrate all the services of Medicare, Medicare Part D and Medicaid into a single set of benefits fully managed by an MMP. Visit the Provider page on the Healthy Connections Prime website (<http://www.scdhhs.gov/prime>) to learn more details about the program or email PrimeProviders@scdhhs.gov with any questions.