



## UEI Coding Alert # 22

### March 22, 2006

### Medicare Consults: New Documentation Requirements

Remember the three Rs of consultations and the required documentation that we covered in the first UEI coding alert?

As you recall:

- You must have received a written\*\* **Request** for consultation from the other doctor.
- You must **Render** an opinion.
- You must send a written **Report** to the requesting doctor.

Following this simple rule is still the best advice.

Effective January, 2006, Medicare now requires both the ordering doctor and the consulting doctor to document the reason for a patient consultation in their respective medical records. *\*\*According to Medicare, the initial referral request may be verbal; however, the requesting and the consulting doctors must document the conversation and the reason for the consult in both the patient's medical records.* A letter requesting the consult is best, but not required. In addition, the outcome of the consultation must now also appear in both doctors' medical records.

In summary, if Medicare pays for a consultation, and then later finds during an audit that the referring doctor did not document the reason for the consultation and the outcome, Medicare could take back their payment.