

AMA Inches Toward CPT AI Coding Shakeup With Updated Taxonomy

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The American Medical Association made updates to Appendix S, a classification system for artificial intelligence technology, setting the groundwork for a CPT AI coding framework called the Clinically Meaningful Algorithmic Analyses (CMAA) that could ultimately be incorporated into Medicare.

AMA hopes to release Appendix S details as early as June 5, according to the doctors' group. If AMA releases the document this summer, that would be faster than standard protocol, two industry sources explained to *Inside Health Policy*.

"If there is a significant framework developed....other stakeholders, including CMS and our friends on Capitol Hill, could see that as a framework from which to take some of their work forward," Cybil Roehrenbeck, a partner at Hogan Lovells, told reporters Thursday (May 14).

The Appendix S update, which takes effect in January 2027, broadly clarifies the definitions of three types of AI tools -- assistive, augmentative and autonomous, according to a document posted Friday (May 15).

AMA typically does not release information about CPT-related updates before releasing the CPT codebook, which typically occurs in the Fall, two industry sources said.

Still, a "big implication of revisions to Appendix S are that it's now going to pave the way for the [AMA's Digital Medicine Coding Committee (DMCC)] to focus on a new code framework to begin with," Victoria Wallace, a partner at Hogan Lovells, told reporters Thursday. Two other industry sources echoed Wallace's characterization.

DMCC is working on the CMAA AI coding framework, which seeks "to describe services in which algorithms process clinically relevant data, such as images or lab results, to produce medically actionable outputs even when no physician is directly involved at the point of service," according to an AMA website.

Another implication of Appendix S is that stakeholders will likely increasingly use the Appendix S taxonomy in code descriptors, so services are labeled as either augmentative, assistive or autonomous, Wallace said.

The emerging CPT AI coding framework comes as GOP lawmakers and HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. scrutinize the entire CPT coding system and float alternatives. It also comes as CMS will soon reimburse companies offering seniors AI-powered care through the ACCESS model, providing an alternative payment option to time-based CPT codes incorporated into Medicare. -*Christian Robles* (crobles@iwpnews.com)