



# AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

## **New CMS Rule will Change how Doctors Utilize Fax Machines for Providing Information to Insurance Companies Frequently Asked Questions**

### **For what healthcare transactions will the use of fax machines be eliminated?**

The rule applies to “claims attachments” which is the supporting documentation that payers sometimes request when the payer is adjudicating a claim. For example, when a health insurer receives a claim, but wants to review imaging or clinical notes before processing your payment. Currently, this back and forth often occurs via fax or mail, which can lead to delays. CMS is eliminating only the fax component of this back and forth communication.

### **Is the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) prohibiting the use of fax machines in all of healthcare?**

No, CMS isn't broadly prohibiting use of fax machines, but the agency is phasing out their use for sending specific information to health insurance companies to process claims. The most common example being phased out occurs when an insurance company is requesting additional information on a primary claim, you will no longer be allowed to fax the additional supplementary supporting information. The insurance company should be informing you how to send additional supplementary supporting information (i.e., copy of medical records).

### **Does elimination of fax for “claims attachments” apply to other insurance companies besides Medicare?**

Yes, the rule impacts HIPAA covered entities including health plans and health care clearinghouses.

### **Does this impact prior authorizations?**

No! You will be required to comply with this rule only for “claims attachments”, but not for any other communications between doctors or between doctors and health plans.

### **When do these changes go into place?**

Doctors must comply with all requirements by **May 26, 2028**. CMS is urging providers to begin preparing now to implement the finalized standards. Watch for updates from health plans on their implementation plans. AOA will also share additional information as it becomes available.

### **Should I throw away my fax machine? What's next?**

Given the limited scope of this rule and the types of transactions it impacts, you don't have to trash your fax machine. As a next step, look for information from health insurers regarding how they plan to implement these rules and any changes they are making including how insurance companies will replace fax communication. AOA will continue to update members on the rule and its impact.