

**ARGUS Claim Review:
A powerful system to guard against errors and fraudulent billing**

*At Cypress Benefit Administrators, we are continually on the lookout for ways to save our clients money on their medical expenses. As a part of this effort, we've instituted **the most all-encompassing fraud protection and cost containment system available: ARGUS Claim Review.** Many of our clients have experienced the **significant savings** generated by ARGUS.*

Following is just one example:

**CASE #98:
Cypress received billing for anesthesia services performed by a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologist**

A physician group is attempting to bill for anesthesia services performed by a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologist (CRNA) without appending the appropriate modifier to the CPT Code in question.

There are certain modifiers that are supposed to be appended to the CPT Codes to note a CRNA assisted in the services performed. In this instance, the physician group was not appending a modifier at all, signifying that there is no CRNA involvement.

However, when the facility bills were received by Cypress from the hospital, we became aware they were attempting to bill for the CRNA services in their billing.

Per the guidelines of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), it is inappropriate for a facility to bill professional fees on their billing. The CRNA charges should have appeared on the HCFA 1500 form. The facility bill should only have included the costs for the space, equipment, supplies and staffing (non-physician) used.

By omitting this modifier on their billings, this physician group would have received more payment than they are entitled to. For example: If the physician group bills \$2,000 and the PPO allowed amount is \$1,500, they should only receive 50% of the \$1,500 if a CRNA was involved, leaving a potential overpayment of \$750.00.

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Argus has identified this as an inappropriate billing pattern. As is the case when inappropriate billing patterns are identified, all anesthesia claims from this physician group are currently flagged and are reviewed, giving the physician's office an opportunity to correct the billing pattern and/or cease and desist from billing in this manner. If they continue to bill in this manner after being made aware of the inappropriateness of it, the physician group may be referred further for investigation.

For more details about Anesthesiologists vs. Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologists, read the latest **ARGUS Advantage Series** article: [Anesthesiology and CRNAs](#).