



American Society of Anesthesiologists/Wisconsin Blue Cross Litigation

Topics Covered: Payment Issues (for Physicians), Managed Care Payments

Outcome: Very Favorable

Issue

The issue in this case was whether an insurance company had improperly "bundled" and "downcoded" bills for medical services provided by anesthesiologists, which resulted in underpayments to those anesthesiologists.

AMA Interest

The AMA supports fair payment to physicians for their medical services.

Case Summary

A number of Wisconsin anesthesiologists complained of improper "bundling" (i.e., packaging of medical services for payment purposes) and "downcoding" by Wisconsin Blue Cross/Blue Shield, contrary to standard Current Procedural Technology ("CPT") coding guidelines for classification of physicians' services. The Litigation Center supported the Wisconsin anesthesiologists in their efforts to secure just payments from Wisconsin Blue.

When the anesthesiologists informed Wisconsin Blue that the AMA was supporting them, Wisconsin Blue initiated settlement discussions. The case settled in the anesthesiologists' favor.

Litigation Center Involvement

The AMA provided general consultation and referral to expert witnesses, as well as publicly declaring support for the physicians.