

Private Practice and Billing for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs)

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Resources

As a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) you have access to Academy resources for billing, coding, Medicare MNT guidelines, as well as the Reimbursement Online Community where novices and experts ask questions and offer insight on medical nutrition therapy reimbursement issues.

If you are new to reimbursement, billing, private practice, or simply curious about reimbursement the AND website www.eatrightpro.org is your best resource. The sections of this page highlight important topics to research on the AND website in order to start your own practice or improve your current practice.

PRIVATE PRACTICE BASICS

The process of starting your own practice, contracting with a clinic, or starting an outpatient nutrition program at an existing clinic requires the following:

- Obtain an NPI (National Provider Identifier) number by completing the application on their website: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/NPPES/Welcome.do>
 - You will need to provide a physical address with your application. You should carefully consider if you want to put your home address, if you do not have an office location, or if you want to obtain a P.O. Box. Most RDNs use a P.O. Box to keep their personal information private.
 - Everyone should obtain an NPI regardless of their working situation. If you plan on billing for your services, you should have an NPI. There may be times where you use your NPI or reassign benefits to a clinic or physician NPI, but you will still need your NPI in those situations. For more information on this visit the "Practice" section on the AND website.
- What will your business structure be? If you organize your own business then you will need a Tax ID number. There are a various types of tax ID numbers. You can decide which is best for you and complete the application here: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-EINs>
 - You will need an EIN for every business structure except sole proprietorship.

- Liability insurance is inexpensive but essential for any practitioner. The Academy offers a discount through their chosen company. This information is available on the AND website.
- The next steps are up to you and your goals as a practitioner.
 - How will you bill for your services? Will you accept insurance? Or Medicare? Will you provide your clients with a superbill so they can obtain reimbursement on their own?
 - If you decide to bill insurance you will need to become a provider with each insurance company you accept.
 - Learn about CAQH and PQRS
 - Will you use a billing service or submit claims on your own?
 - Consider joining the Reimbursement Community on the AND website. The Reimbursement Community is a discussion board where anyone can post a question on reimbursement. The Academy also posts helpful information on current issues as well as updates on progress the Academy is making on increasing coverage for nutrition services.

BECOMING A PROVIDER

Any RDN should consider becoming a provider with Medicare or private insurance companies. Success and profits can be found without becoming a credentialed provider. When deciding whether or not to become credentialed, each RDN must consider the pros and cons of each.

Becoming a credentialed provider is different for each insurance company and requires persistence. The June 2014 MNT Provider Newsletter has helpful information for those interested in becoming credentialed. The first step is researching the insurance companies that offer services in the area where you will practice. The chart below lists many of the insurance companies operating in Utah.

INSURANCE COMPANY	DO THEY CREDENTIAL RDNs?	HOW CAN AN RDN BECOME CREDENTIALLED?
Altius	YES	800-377-4161
Arches Mutual	YES	http://archeshealth.org/provider-medical/provider-faq.html "All providers contracted with the Altius network are automatically contracted with Arches Health Plan. Arches also contracts with providers and clinics on an individual basis."
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Utah	YES	https://www.regence.com/documents/10192/36255/Practitioner+c+redentialing+criteria+for+participation+and+termination/97a0b309-16b4-4df1-b8a3-fe205c4c2e17 https://www.regence.com/web/regence_provider/provider-types . Complete the form as instructed. RDNs must complete the form and Regence will inform you if the network is open. Closed: Participating Networks, Preferred ValueCare Network, Preferred BlueOption Network, Regence MedAdvantage Network. Invitation Only: Preferred FocalPoint Network.

Bridgespan Health Company	YES	https://www.bridgespanhealth.com/web/bridgespan_provider/forms Scroll down the page to "credentialing" and follow the instructions on the form.
Humana Medical Plan	YES	Contact: 1-800-626-2741 Email: mountaindivision@humana.com for more information specific to Utah
Medicaid of Utah		https://medicaid.utah.gov/become-medicaid-provider Contact Provider Enrollment: 801-538-6155
Medicare (Noridian)	YES	https://www.noridianmedicare.com/partb/welcome
Molina Healthcare (Medicaid and Medicare)	YES	Contact: 801-858-0400
Public Employee Health Plan (PEHP)	YES	Contact Provider Relations: 801-366-7557 There is a different representative for each region in Utah. The operator can connect you with the correct representative.
Select Health	NO	
Time Insurance Company (also known as Assurant Health)		Contact: 888-575-6421
TriCare (managed by United Healthcare)	YES	https://www.uhcmilitarywest.com/uhc/militarywest/Files/pdfs/Provider_Handbook_October_2014.pdf Contact: 877-988-9378
United Healthcare	YES	Contact: 877-842-3210 choose option "other professionals" and then "credentialing" UHC does not have open networks. RDNs seeking to become credentialed must fill out the forms, submit, and then they will be notified of acceptance. Prospective providers can also register with CAQH to assist the process.

The MNT Provider newsletter is published each month and a link can be found on the AND website.

Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH)

From their website: "A nonprofit alliance of health plans and trade associations, CAQH serves as a catalyst for industry collaboration on initiatives that simplify healthcare administration for health plans and providers, resulting in a better care experience for patients and caregivers."

Many health insurance companies rely on CAQH to make the process of credentialing providers simpler. The CAQH form is accepted by many private healthcare plans and you only have to complete the form once to be credentialed with multiple companies. Go to www.caqh.org/access-upd.php for instructions on becoming a member. In order to become a

member you must contact a participating organization, ask to be included on the CAQH roster. They will provide you with a CAQH number, that number will allow you to login to CAQH and complete the UPD uniform application.

Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS)

PQRS, formerly known as Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI), combines incentive payments and payment adjustments to eligible professionals (EPs) who voluntarily report quality information regarding services provided to Medicare Part B Fee-for-Service beneficiaries. RDNs who are credentialed with Medicare are considered EPs.

How does PQRS affect the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist?

Currently EPs who report to PQRS are receiving incentive payments to participate but in 2015 EPs who do not report satisfactorily will be subject to payment adjustments. Essentially, RDNs who do not participate in PQRS but still submit claims for covered Physician Fee Schedule services under Medicare Part B Fee-for-Service will still be reimbursed but that reimbursement rate will be less than those who do voluntarily report data.

The AND website (www.eatrightpro.org) has information specific for RDNs and how to get started with PQRS. Be sure to use the links on the left side of the page for step-by-step instructions on how to get started. Or you can go directly to the source:

http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/PQRS/How_To_Get_Started.html

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AND WEBSITE

- MD/RDN PARTNERSHIPS: This is an option for RDNs looking to expand their practice and also share resources.
- EXAMPLE REFERRAL FORMS AND REFERRAL REQUIREMENTS: Referrals can generate business for any practitioner. Referral requirements are different for each insurance plan. Once you are credentialed with an insurance company you will learn whether or not your clients will need a referral before they can meet with you.
- CODES DEFINITIONS: This is especially helpful for practitioners who are new to the reimbursement area of practice. You will find instructions on when to use specific codes and modifiers to provide your clients with the best care.
- BILLING INCIDENT TO FOR PRIVATE AND MEDICARE: For those situations when an RDN cannot directly bill insurance as the provider these instructions will ensure your claims are not denied.
- MEDICARE PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE: Many RDNs use the Medicare fee schedule as a starting point or setting their own fees. It will also help you decide if you want to be a Medicare provider.

- 2010 BILLING GUIDE: This guide was created was sponsored by the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust. Its contents were edited to be accurate for all RDNs nationwide. This can be downloaded from the AND website. It is an invaluable resource for RDNs with step-by-step instructions to begin the reimbursement process.
- AND STORE: The AND store has books and toolkits to help you be successful. Some products are a free benefit of being a member while others are available at a discount.
 - *Making Nutrition Your Business: Private Practice and Beyond*. Faye Berger Mitchell, RD, and Ann M. Silver, MS, RD, CDE, CDN.
 - Check out the Toolkits for additional information on reimbursement, MNT, and other topics

UTAH ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS RESOURCES

UAND REIMBURSEMENT REPRESENTATIVE: Nicole Kendrick, RDN, CD, CNSC

- Contact with any questions regarding reimbursement, insurance credentialing, Medicare, or any ideas you have for increasing coverage and reimbursement for nutrition services in the state of Utah.

UTAH INSURANCE DEPARTMENT:

- <https://insurance.utah.gov>
- <https://insurance.utah.gov/health/reform.php>: Use this website to obtain information about insurance companies operating in the state. The site also has specific information for how the Affordable Care Act is being implemented.
- The Essential Health Benefits Benchmark Plan for Utah: <https://insurance.utah.gov/legal-resources/rules/documents/266PEHP-UtahBasicPlus8-2012.pdf>