

November 2020

**OVERVIEW:**

Aetna Better Health of Louisiana (ABHLA) is aligned with the Louisiana Department of Health's Medicaid Services Manual, and would like to remind providers to refer to these manuals when submitting claims. If the manual requires additional guidance impacting reimbursement, the details will be outlined by ABHLA in a supporting reimbursement policy.

Per the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) [Louisiana Medicaid Professional Services Manual, Section 5.1 Covered Services](#) and [CMS Claims Processing guidelines](#), ABHLA will enact edits and audits to claims where an assistant or co-surgeon is utilized:

Per [Louisiana Medicaid Professional Services Manual, Section 5.1 Covered Services](#)

*"Assistant Surgeon/Assistant at Surgery*

*Louisiana Medicaid will reimburse for only one assistant at surgery. The assistant to the surgeon should be a qualified physician. However, in those situations when a physician does not serve as the assistant, qualified, enrolled, advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants may function in the role of an assistant at surgery and submit claims for their services under their Medicaid provider number.*

*Physicians serving as the assistant are to use the modifier "80" on the procedure code(s) representing their services.*

*Advanced practice registered nurses, certified nurse midwives, and physician assistants are to use the modifier "AS" when reporting their services as the only assistant at surgery.*

*The reimbursement of claims for more than one assistant at surgery is subject to recoupment."*

Per [CMS Claims Processing guidelines](#),

§ 20.4.3 Assistant at Surgery Services

*"Procedures billed with the assistant-at-surgery physician modifiers -80, -81, -82, or the AS modifier for physician assistants, nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists, are subject to the assistant-at-surgery policy. Accordingly, pay claims for procedures with these modifiers only if the services of an assistant-at-surgery are authorized."*

Assistant Surgeon claims will be reimbursed at a 20% reduction of the primary surgeon fee schedule amount. Claims will be reviewed to determine whether the Assistant Surgeon/Assistant at Surgery Reduction was applied. If a reduction was not applied, the reimbursement for the surgeries/procedures will be recalculated to properly pay.

Please note that providers may see reimbursement impacted if not aligned to the Louisiana Department of Health's Medicaid services manual within 30 days of the date of this reminder notification.

#### Questions and Support:

For questions, please contact [LAProvider@AETNA.com](mailto:LAProvider@AETNA.com) or call 1-855-242-0802 and follow the prompts.