Medicare CBSA Codes Documentation

Introduction:

Having accurate CBSA codes are crucial for Medicare Billing. The wrong code can mean having a claim rejected. Using standard CBSA codes for Medicare Billing won't work. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) overrides standard CBSA codes in certain areas and under different circumstances. There are many nuances to the data and we've spent many hours researching the requirements so that you don't have to.

Note: on April 1, 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) took effect which will give an additional 3% payment for home health services to patients in rural areas. Our product will show you if the patient is in a rural area or not.

These notes describe our Medicare CBSA Codes product. It provides a simplified explanation of the marketing areas which the U.S. Government has defined. Note: the government makes changes to these definitions and we stay on top of these changes and will add them when available. Changes occur primarily where populations have shifted significantly. For instance, if an area had 8,000 people, but now has over 10,000 people, it will become a new Micropolitan area.

What's the Difference?

This product differs from regular CBSA codes in multiple ways:

- The CMS makes their definitions ahead of time on a fiscal year basis and they don't change until the next year, even when CBSA codes have been changed by the Office of Management and Budget.
- The CMS uses a state Medicare number which is not the same as a state FIPS code.
- The CMS uses the Division code instead of the CBSA Code, when the CBSA is part of a division.
- There are other changes as well.

Overview of the Definitions:

In the year 2000, the Office of Management and Budget redefined the way market areas are defined. They have gone by different names in the past (SMSAs, MSAs, CMSAs, etc.) and now there are even more acronyms. These market areas have been refined again with the

latest changes made. The previous (MSA) codes covered about 80 percent of the country, but the new codes cover about 93 percent.

There are basically two major classifications of codes:

- **Metropolitan Statistical Areas** (population of 50,000 or more people).
- **Micropolitan Statistical Areas** (from 10,000 up to 50,000 people).

So what's a **CBSA**? It is the name the government is using to describe *both* the Metropolitan and Micropolitan areas. It stands for **Core-Based Statistical Areas**. Essentially, a CBSA contains one or more counties with an urban area of 10,000 or more people and the counties that have people which would commute to that area. In Puerto Rico, the 'county' areas are called "municipios" (municipality / community).

Note: there are CBSA records for the continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

For large areas that have over 2.5 million people, they may be subdivided into **Metropolitan Divisions**. Medicare will use these division codes, rather than the CBSA codes, so that is what we will include in our data.

One more definition: if you are looking for very large areas, there are **CSAs (Combined Statistical Areas)** which are similar to the old CMSA. This is a code that groups large, nearby metro areas such as the Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, WA area. These are not used in Medicare Billing, so we won't include them in this product.

An example that should help you to understand these definitions is as follows:

The **Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, WA** Combined Statistical Area (**CSA**) **Code** is **500**. This consists of the following **CBSA** codes:

14740	Bremerton-Silverdale, WA Metropolitan Statistical Area
36020	Oak Harbor, WA Micropolitan Statistical Area
36500	Olympia, WA Metropolitan Statistical Area
42660	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metropolitan Statistical Area
43220	Shelton, WA Micropolitan Statistical Area

Since the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metropolitan Statistical Area (#42660) contains over 2.5 million people; it is broken down into the following **Metropolitan Divisions**:

42644	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA (King and Snohomish counties).
45104	Tacoma, WA (Pierce County)

Note: Some codes begin with '999' which indicate rural areas.

Also note that there used to be Medicare CBSA override codes beginning with '50', but they seem to no longer be used, except for Hospice Wage Indexes. If you need this, please let us know.

Our Data Files:

The following files are provided. Note: these files have been 'normalized,' which means they have been set up to minimize the amount of duplication of information. This is ideal for programmers.

The following are the files included with the full version of this product (demos have similar names, but with 'demo' in them):

med-cbsa-list-full.csv: This has the CBSA code, along with the CBSA name and type ('Metro' or 'Micro'). Note: since Medicare will use the Division code when a CBSA is part of a Division, we will include those codes and names for all CBSAs that are a part of a Division. Using the example above, rather than including 42660 for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, our file will contain two records: 42644 (Seattle-Bellevue-Everett) and 45104 (Tacoma).

med-zip-cbsa-full.csv: This has one record for every ZIP Code and the corresponding CBSA / Division codes for that ZIP. Note: rural areas will have '999' followed by a 2-digit *Medicare* state code (not the same as the FIPS code).   This will also have the state abbreviation, city and county. Note: this file will not include military APO/FPO records and most territories in the South Pacific (Guam is included).

state-medicare.csv: This is a master list of the 2-digit Medicare state code (not the same as the FIPS state code), the standards USPS state abbreviation and the state name.

CSA-List.csv: This has the CSA number, name, latest population estimate and rank.

State-CSA.csv: This has the state abbreviation and CSA number for each CSA in a state.

State-CBSA.csv: This has the state abbreviation and CBSA number for each CBSA in a state.

CSA-Master.csv: This is the file which has all CSA codes and its corresponding CBSA codes.

Division.csv: This has the breakdown of each division within a CBSA. It has the latest population estimate for that division.