A Message to

Business Office Managers

8000 Midlantic Drive, Suite 333, Mt. Laurel N.J. 08054

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Participating Hospitals and Surgery Centers in New Jersey

FROM: Kathleen Mariano
Manager, Provider Relations

DATE: January 9, 2002

SUBJECT: REGISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSISTANTS (RNFAs)

AmeriHealth's Medical policy covers an assistant surgeon for some procedures. This is because of the complexity and difficulties for some major surgical procedure(s), which require the use of a second surgeon to actively assist the primary surgeon during the procedure(s).

There are many specific surgical procedure codes that allow for a separate reimbursement for an assistant surgeon. All other procedures will be denied when an assistant surgeon bills. We will share a list of the specific codes upon request.

However, when individuals other than Surgeons and Assistant Surgeons bill for these procedures, they are not eligible for separate reimbursement through the insurance carrier. New Jersey regulations at N.J.A.C. 13:35-4.1 requires that an assistant surgeon be available for major surgical procedures as determined by the licensed health care facility.

While Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFAs) may qualify to act as first assistants during a major surgical procedure, the regulation does not require separate reimbursement to a RNFA for such services. Moreover, RNFAs must be credentialed by the licensed health care facility and as such reimbursement for their services are included in the facility's reimbursement for a particular case. AmeriHealth 's contract with participating Hospitals includes reimbursement for all Operating Room services. Should a Hospital contract with an RNFA to assist in performing Operating Room services, reimbursement for such services will be made to the Hospital pursuant to the terms of their contract with AmeriHealth. Accordingly, the RNFA must seek payment through the Hospital.

If you have any questions about this bulletin, please contact your Hospital Coordinator at 856-778-6500.