

RCW 48.43.600 Overpayment recovery—Carrier. (1) Except in the case of fraud, or as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, a carrier may not: (a) Request a refund from a health care provider of a payment previously made to satisfy a claim unless it does so in writing to the provider within twenty-four months after the date that the payment was made; or (b) request that a contested refund be paid any sooner than six months after receipt of the request. Any such request must specify why the carrier believes the provider owes the refund. If a provider fails to contest the request in writing to the carrier within thirty days of its receipt, the request is deemed accepted and the refund must be paid.

(2) A carrier may not, if doing so for reasons related to coordination of benefits with another carrier or entity responsible for payment of a claim: (a) Request a refund from a health care provider of a payment previously made to satisfy a claim unless it does so in writing to the provider within thirty months after the date that the payment was made; or (b) request that a contested refund be paid any sooner than six months after receipt of the request. Any such request must specify why the carrier believes the provider owes the refund, and include the name and mailing address of the entity that has primary responsibility for payment of the claim. If a provider fails to contest the request in writing to the carrier within thirty days of its receipt, the request is deemed accepted and the refund must be paid.

(3) A carrier may at any time request a refund from a health care provider of a payment previously made to satisfy a claim if: (a) A third party, including a government entity, is found responsible for satisfaction of the claim as a consequence of liability imposed by law, such as tort liability; and (b) the carrier is unable to recover directly from the third party because the third party has either already paid or will pay the provider for the health services covered by the claim.

(4) If a contract between a carrier and a health care provider conflicts with this section, this section shall prevail. However, nothing in this section prohibits a health care provider from choosing at any time to refund to a carrier any payment previously made to satisfy a claim.

(5) For purposes of this section, "refund" means the return, either directly or through an offset to a future claim, of some or all of a payment already received by a health care provider.

(6) This section neither permits nor precludes a carrier from recovering from a subscriber, enrollee, or beneficiary any amounts paid to a health care provider for benefits to which the subscriber, enrollee, or beneficiary was not entitled under the terms and conditions of the health plan, insurance policy, or other benefit agreement.

(7) This section does not apply to claims for health care services provided through dental only health carriers, health care services provided under Title XVIII (medicare) of the social security act, or medicare supplemental plans regulated under chapter 48.66 RCW. [2005 c 278 § 1.]

Application—2005 c 278: "This act applies to contracts issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2006." [2005 c 278 § 3.]