

(d) No agreement by a miner to waive his or her right to benefits under the Act and the provisions of this part shall be valid.

(e) This section shall not affect any other liability of the employer under this part.

§ 725.621 Reports.

(a) Upon making the first payment of benefits and upon suspension, reduction, or increase of payments, the operator or other employer responsible for making payments shall immediately notify the district director of the action taken, in accordance with a form prescribed by the Office.

(b) Within 16 days after final payment of benefits has been made by an employer, such employer shall so notify the district director, in accordance with a form prescribed by the Office, stating that such final payment, has been made, the total amount of benefits paid, the name of the beneficiary, and such other information as the Office deems pertinent.

(c) The Director may from time to time prescribe such additional reports to be made by operators, other employers, or carriers as the Director may consider necessary for the efficient administration of the Act.

(d) Any employer who fails or refuses to file any report required of such employer under this section shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$500 for each failure or refusal, which penalty shall be determined in accordance with the procedures set forth in subpart D of part 726 of this subchapter, as appropriate. The maximum penalty applicable to any violation of this paragraph that takes place after January 19, 2001 shall be \$550.

(e) No request for information or response to such request shall be considered a report for purposes of this section or the Act, unless it is so designated by the Director or by this section.

Subpart J—Medical Benefits and Vocational Rehabilitation

§ 725.701 Availability of medical benefits.

(a) A miner who is determined to be eligible for benefits under this part or

part 727 of this subchapter (see § 725.4(d)) is entitled to medical benefits as set forth in this subpart as of the date of his or her claim, but in no event before January 1, 1974. No medical benefits shall be provided to the survivor or dependent of a miner under this part.

(b) A responsible operator, other employer, or where there is neither, the fund, shall furnish a miner entitled to benefits under this part with such medical, surgical, and other attendance and treatment, nursing and hospital services, medicine and apparatus, and any other medical service or supply, for such periods as the nature of the miner's pneumoconiosis and disability requires.

(c) The medical benefits referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section shall include palliative measures useful only to prevent pain or discomfort associated with the miner's pneumoconiosis or attendant disability.

(d) The costs recoverable under this subpart shall include the reasonable cost of travel necessary for medical treatment (to be determined in accordance with prevailing United States government mileage rates) and the reasonable documented cost to the miner or medical provider incurred in communicating with the employer, carrier, or district director on matters connected with medical benefits.

(e) If a miner receives a medical service or supply, as described in this section, for any pulmonary disorder, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the disorder is caused or aggravated by the miner's pneumoconiosis. The party liable for the payment of benefits may rebut the presumption by producing credible evidence that the medical service or supply provided was for a pulmonary disorder apart from those previously associated with the miner's disability, or was beyond that necessary to effectively treat a covered disorder, or was not for a pulmonary disorder at all.

(f) Evidence that the miner does not have pneumoconiosis or is not totally disabled by pneumoconiosis arising out of coal mine employment is insufficient to defeat a request for coverage of any medical service or supply under this subpart. In determining whether

the treatment is compensable, the opinion of the miner's treating physician may be entitled to controlling weight pursuant to § 718.104(d). A finding that a medical service or supply is not covered under this subpart shall not otherwise affect the miner's entitlement to benefits.

§ 725.702 Claims for medical benefits only under section 11 of the Reform Act.

(a) Section 11 of the Reform Act directs the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to notify each miner receiving benefits under part B of title IV of the Act that he or she may file a claim for medical treatment benefits described in this subpart. Section 725.308(b) provides that a claim for medical treatment benefits shall be filed on or before December 31, 1980, unless the period is enlarged for good cause shown. This section sets forth the rules governing the processing, adjudication, and payment of claims filed under section 11.

(b)(1) A claim filed pursuant to the notice described in paragraph (a) of this section shall be considered a claim for medical benefits only, and shall be filed, processed, and adjudicated in accordance with the provisions of this part, except as provided in this section. While a claim for medical benefits must be treated as any other claim filed under part C of title IV of the Act, the Department shall accept the Social Security Administration's finding of entitlement as its initial determination.

(2) In the case of a part B beneficiary whose coal mine employment terminated before January 1, 1970, the Secretary shall make an immediate award of medical benefits. Where the part B beneficiary's coal mine employment terminated on or after January 1, 1970, the Secretary shall immediately authorize the payment of medical benefits and thereafter inform the responsible operator, if any, of the operator's right to contest the claimant's entitlement for medical benefits.

(c) A miner on whose behalf a claim is filed under this section (see § 725.301) must have been alive on March 1, 1978, in order for the claim to be considered.

(d) The criteria contained in subpart C of part 727 of this subchapter (see § 725.4(d)) are applicable to claims for medical benefits filed under this section.

(e) No determination made with respect to a claim filed under this section shall affect any determination previously made by the Social Security Administration. The Social Security Administration may, however, reopen a previously approved claim if the conditions set forth in § 410.672(c) of this chapter are present. These conditions are generally limited to fraud or concealment.

(f) If medical benefits are awarded under this section, such benefits shall be payable by a responsible coal mine operator (see subpart G of this part), if the miner's last employment occurred on or after January 1, 1970, and in all other cases by the fund. An operator which may be required to provide medical treatment benefits to a miner under this section shall have the right to participate in the adjudication of the claim as is otherwise provided in this part.

(g) Any miner whose coal mine employment terminated after January 1, 1970, may be required to submit to a medical examination requested by an identified operator. The unreasonable refusal to submit to such an examination shall have the same consequences as are provided under § 725.414.

(h) If a miner is determined eligible for medical benefits in accordance with this section, such benefits shall be provided from the date of filing, except that such benefits may also include payments for any unreimbursed medical treatment costs incurred personally by such miner during the period from January 1, 1974, to the date of filing which are attributable to medical care required as a result of the miner's total disability due to pneumoconiosis. No reimbursement for health insurance premiums, taxes attributable to any public health insurance coverage, or other deduction or payments made for the purpose of securing third party liability for medical care costs is authorized by this section. If a miner seeks reimbursement for medical care costs personally incurred before the filing of a claim under this section, the