



Radiology Trends

Medical Billing and Management Services

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Did You Know?

RAC auditors will begin auditing Medicaid claims in January, 2012.

Medicare's newly released final rule on Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) contains some significant changes. Based on more than 1200 comments, the quality measures have been reduced from 65 to 33. Also of note is the fact that providers will now share in all savings, not just those over 2%.

Move to Repeal SGR

In a vote of 15-2, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) proposed a plan to Congress that would allow the repeal of the sustainable growth rate (SGR) for provider payments. Proposed physician reimbursement would be cut by 5.9% for the next three years for all but primary-care physicians. Rates would remain frozen for the following seven years. This is slated to save

\$100 billion versus SGR costs over the next ten years. \$220 billion in savings is slated to come from non-physician savings.

Allyson Schwartz (D-PA) sent a letter to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, containing signatures of 92 Democrats and 21 Republicans, backing the repeal of the SGR. Representative Dr. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), who also

signed Schwartz's letter, sent his own letter last month to the Joint Committee last month to disband the Independent Payment Advisory Board created by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

If no action is taken, a 29.5% cut in physician reimbursement is scheduled to take place in January. President Obama postponed the 25% decrease scheduled for 2011 for one year.

AMA Weighs In on Liability Reform

The American Medical Association sent a letter to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction asking them to include medical liability reform in its legislative proposal. The AMA is

asking for a cap of \$250,000 on non-economic damages and protections for physicians providing emergency or disaster care, among other issues. These reforms have

been successful in California and Texas and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that implementing these reforms nationally could reduce the federal deficit by \$62.4 billion over ten years.

In The News

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Coding and Compliance Tips by Lori Shore

Recently released CPT changes for 2012, effective January 1st, show the continued bundling trend. Interventional radiology will be significantly impacted by the bundling of renal angiography codes into four all-inclusive selections. Codes 36251-36254 will represent selective first order unilateral and bilateral and superselective unilateral and bilateral bundles. IVC filter studies have also been bundled into three all-inclusive codes representing insertion, repositioning and removal.

Facet joint injection codes have been changed, again, to include either fluoro or CT guidance and

re-ordered to list cervical or thoracic before lumbar or sacral.

Abdominal paracentesis codes have been changed to either 49082—without imaging guidance or 49083—with imaging guidance.

49084 now represents peritoneal lavage with imaging guidance.

Pulmonary nuclear medicine codes have been condensed into 4 codes: 78579—Pulmonary ventilation imaging, 78582—Pulmonary ventilation and perfusion, 78597—Quantitative differential pulmonary perfusion and 78598—Quantitative differential pulmonary perfu-

California Blue Shield Proposes 2% Revenue Cap for ACOs

Following the announcement of nearly \$20 million for the development of Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs), Blue Shield of California proposed an income cap of 2% of its revenue. The proposal would return any remaining savings back to its customers. The California Department of Managed Care reported individual rate increases averaging 37.5%.

\$10 million has been budgeted for ACO grants for fiscal years 2010 and 2011. Blue Shield expects to return \$295 million back to customers and the community based on estimated 2011 earnings.

CMA Calls for Legalization of Pot

The California Medical Association (CMA) is calling for the legalization of marijuana. "California has decriminalized marijuana, yet it's still illegal on a federal level. That puts physicians in an incredibly difficult legal position, since we're the ones ultimately recommending the drug," said Dr. James Hay, CMA president. Doctors fear that their Drug Enforcement Agency registrations could be revoked by feds or that prescribing medical marijuana could result in a felony conviction that would exclude them from the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

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Thanksgiving

