



Radiology Trends

Medical Billing and Management Services

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Did You Know?

The Association of American Medical Colleges is reporting a record number of applicants in 2011. First year enrollments were up by 3% over 2010. Minority applicants and enrollees were also up.

According to IMV Medical Information Division, a marketing research firm, procedure counts in Nuclear Medicine/SPECT have decreased 0.5% each year from 2007 to 2010. The economy, insurance pre-authorization concerns and studies moving to other modalities were cited as possible reasons.

Meaningful Use Continues to Puzzle

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has just published a Meaningful Use Beginners Guide. It can be found at : http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/Downloads/Beginners_Guide.pdf

It provides links to certified electronic health record programs that report data in the specified format. It has an eligibility checker and registration tools. What is doesn't provide are

the definitive answers that many radiologists are seeking.

Participation is for individual physicians and the Beginners' Guide specifically states that hospital-based groups cannot participate. Hospital-based is defined as having 90% or more of professional services performed in place of service 21 (inpatient) or 23 (emergency department).

Those eligible to participate must choose be-

tween the Medicare incentive or the Medicaid program but may not participate in both.

HHS Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, announced that Stage 2 of Meaningful Use would be delayed for one-year to encourage more to participate.

AMA Finds Most Metropolitan Insurance Markets Not Competitive

Researchers from the American Medical Association (AMA) using guidelines issued by the Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued a report called Competition in Health Insurance: A

Comprehensive Study of U.S. Markets. They found that 83% of 368 metropolitan markets studied were highly concentrated markets. In 24 of 48 states studied, the two largest insurers

had a 70% or greater market share.

America's Health Insurance Plans released a statement calling the study, "limited and unreliable."

In The News

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Coding and Compliance Tips by Lori Shore

Radiology has arguably, had more than its share of bundling in recent years. As if bundling CT abdomen and pelvis (and CTA abdomen and pelvis in 2012) didn't have enough economic impact, the continued move towards all-inclusive codes in interventional radiology is continuing into 2012.

In 2011, endovascular revascularization codes were put into hierarchies and coded based on territory rather than artery. For 2012, selective and superselective catheter placements into the renal system for angioplasty are being bundled into

all-inclusive codes. Codes 36251-36254 include conscious sedation, the puncture, catheterization, fluoroscopy, contrast injection(s), flush aortogram and pressure measurements (when performed), post processing, and supervision and interpretation. Although not specifically included in the code definitions, if an angiaseal device is used at the puncture site it will not be separately reportable either.

IVC filter placements will also bundle the supervision and interpretation in 2012 with the newly created code 37191. Similarly, bundled codes

Supreme Court to Hear Case on Legality of Health Care Reform

The Supreme Court announced that it will hear oral arguments on the validity of four questions that split local circuit courts on the legality of the mandate that all Americans purchase health insurance or face tax penalties. According to the court's spokesperson, the case is likely to be heard in March with the ruling likely published in late spring.

CMS Accepting ACO Applications

Medicare Shared Savings Program applications are now being accepted by CMS. The 21-page application can be found at www.cms.gov. The accountable care organization (ACO) program has two start dates, April 1st and July 1st. Applications for the April 1st start date are being accepted from December 1, 2011 through January 20, 2012. Practices accepted into the program will be named on March 16, 2012. Applications for the July 1st start date will be accepted from March 1-30, 2012 with participating practices named on May 31, 2012.

Wishing you and yours
A Very Happy and
Healthy
Holiday
Season!

