

U.S. House and Senate Notification
Friday, June 25, 2010

To: Congressional Health Staff

From: Amy Hall
Director, Office of Legislation
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Re: Affordable Care Act Provisions and the CY 2011 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today issued a proposed rule to update Medicare payment policies and payment rates for services furnished by physicians and non-physician practitioners paid under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. The proposed rule would also implement a number of key provisions of the Affordable Care Act of 2010, including an expansion of preventive services for Medicare beneficiaries, improved payments for primary care services, and better access to health care services in rural areas. The proposed policies would apply to services furnished on or after January 1, 2011.

In addition, the proposed rule would continue recent efforts by CMS to improve the accuracy of physicians' payment rates by implementing Affordable Care Act mandates to identify services that are at significant risk for inaccurate payment, and further reducing payments for certain diagnostic imaging services. Other provisions would include implementation of changes to the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI). PQRI is a voluntary reporting program, first implemented in 2007, that provides an incentive payment to eligible professionals who satisfactorily report data on quality measures for services paid under the physician fee schedule during a specified reporting period. In the proposed rule, CMS proposes to implement several provisions of the Affordable Care Act that changed the structure and function of the PQRI program.

CMS will accept comments on the proposed rule until August 24, 2010, and will respond to them in a final rule to be issued on or about November 1, 2010.

If you have any questions, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation. Thank you.