

CMS-1317-P-6

Medicare Program; Revisions to the Payment Policies of Ambulance Services under the Fee Schedule for Ambulance Services

Submitter :

Date & Time: 06/20/2006

Organization :

Category : Health Care Professional or Association

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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We need to care for the patients...What you want to do is wrong...

Submitter : Dr. Brandon Koretz
Organization : UCLA Division of Geriatric Medicine
Category : Physician

Date: 06/23/2006

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

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I am pleased to learn that it has been recommended that the work RVU for evaluation and management services be increased. As an academic Geriatrician who has devoted his entire career to serving the elderly, my trainees must see that the important work that they are doing is valued by society. Given the critical shortage of American Geriatricians, we, as a society, must do everything we can to promote this as a valued career choice for young physicians. Increasing reimbursement for the core activity of these doctors, E/M services accomplishes this.

As the population ages, the patients in my own practice are requiring a markedly higher level of sophistication in order to manage their medications (and multiple interactions) to say nothing of the time that is spent co-ordinating various aspects of their care.

Without better Medicare reimbursement for these activities, more and more of America's frail elderly would find themselves without physicians. In the past year alone, 3 of my colleagues have closed their practices to Medicare assignment.

While I realize that increased in E/M reimbursement would come at the expense of procedures, it is clear to me that such an overall shift would certainly lead to more in depth assessments and a greater reliance on history taking and physical examination. In the end, such an approach would lead to higher levels of patient satisfaction and a lower overall cost. The savings would result from fewer high ticket procedures obtained instead of taking an extra few minutes to complete a physical examination.