

**October 21, 2010**

**AMA/FEDERATION NEWS:** National headlines, grassroots news and important AMA announcements for Federation executives and communicators.

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**TOP STORIES**

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**1. More Medicare cuts loom; physicians can tell their story**

Physicians are facing a 23 percent cut in Medicare payments on December 1, followed by an additional 6 percent cut on January 1, if Congress doesn't act to change the flawed sustainable growth rate formula.

The AMA is working to prevent the December cuts. Congress is now in recess leading up to the November 2 elections, and a lame-duck Congress may consider putting off the cuts yet again. Physicians can tell Congress to stop the cuts through the AMA's Physicians' Grassroots Network at <http://capwiz.com/ama/home> and ask their patients to do the same by joining the AMA's Patients' Action Network at <http://www.patientsactionnetwork.org>.

Several times this year Congress did not pass legislation in time to avert cuts. As a result, Medicare carriers stopped processing claims in order to avoid paying them at the reduced rates.

The AMA conducted a survey of physicians earlier this year to find out the impact of the claims holds and delayed congressional action on physician practices. The survey results made it clear that the payment uncertainties and delays were highly disruptive. Many practices were forced to seek loans to meet expenses or to lay off staff. Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/399/medicare-survey-results.pdf> to view the key findings from the survey.

The AMA is looking for detailed anecdotes that will help make a more compelling case to Congress by personalizing these disruptions in care to seniors that the cuts may cause. If physicians had to take out a loan, establish a line a credit, cut back on their staff, stop taking new Medicare patients, or take other serious actions to deal with Medicare payment cuts, please have them e-mail the AMA at [killsg@ama-assn.org](mailto:killsg@ama-assn.org) and share their story.

## **2. It's time for physicians to reassess Medicare in their practices**

This year's Medicare participation decision period arrives at a time of tremendous uncertainty for physicians and patients. Physicians can learn about the options they have—participation in Medicare, nonparticipation in Medicare or opting out of Medicare and privately contracting with patients—during “Understanding your Medicare choices: Preparing for the 2011 Medicare participation decision,” an AMA webinar scheduled to take place at 7 p.m. Eastern time October 27.

AMA President Cecil B. Wilson, MD, and the AMA's advocacy staff will describe the advantages and disadvantages of the three options and walk participants through examples of how payments are calculated under each one.

Participants also will be introduced to a series of resources that help physicians gauge which Medicare option is right for their practice. Resources include a worksheet that calculates the revenue impact of changing from “participating” to “nonparticipating” status and sample communications that physicians can use when explaining their Medicare participation to patients. The webinar also will cover government-proposed 2011 Medicare physician payment policy changes.

Physicians can visit <https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/schedule/display.do?udc=5a74009pnkwm> to learn more and register.

## **3. Getting the most for our health care dollars—watch and learn how**

A series of presentations from the AMA, entitled “Getting the most for our health care dollars: Strategies to address rising health care costs,” identifies opportunities to reduce the rate of growth in health care spending while improving health outcomes and quality of care.

Each educational piece in the series highlights specific topics and actions that can help move the health care system in a direction that aligns costs and benefits in ways that make sense. The series explores:

- Strategies to address rising health care costs
- Medical liability reform
- Variation in health care delivery and utilization
- Administrative costs of health care coverage
- Comparative effectiveness research
- Health information technology

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/healthcarecosts> to view these brief presentations and to receive free white papers on each topic.

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## FEDERATION NEWS

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### **4. Revolution in payment practice webinar series to hit New Hampshire, Iowa**

Learn how physicians can lead new payment and delivery models by attending “Pathways to Success: What physicians need to know about the coming revolution in payment practices,” an AMA seminar being held in various cities around the country. Upcoming seminars are scheduled for November 13 in Concord, N.H., and December 8 in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/2010-strategic-issues/payment-model-resources/payment-pathways-cme.shtml> to learn more and register for the seminar in New Hampshire.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/2010-strategic-issues/payment-model-resources/payment-models-seminar-iowa.shtml> to learn more and register for the seminar in Iowa.

The American Medical Association is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The American Medical Association designates this live activity for a maximum of 4.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*<sup>™</sup>.

### **5. Attend second PCPI webinar in new measure testing series next month**

Are you planning to test your physician performance measures and want to ensure that you benefit from lessons learned from past measure testing projects? State and specialty society employees as well as physicians are invited to attend “Measure Testing Projects: Revealing Lessons Learned,” at 1 p.m. Eastern time November 17. This is the second in a series of three measure-testing webinars that will be offered.

Hosted by the AMA-convened Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement® (PCPI), the webinar will feature presenter Keri Christensen, an AMA senior policy analyst, who will

highlight best practices from past measure-testing projects and address questions regarding measure testing, including:

- Who should perform the chart abstraction?
- How can we ensure that each chart abstracter interprets the measures correctly?
- How do participating physician practices benefit from the project?
- What resources do the participating physician practices need to provide in order to make the project successful?
- How do we know that our results are statistically significant?

Visit <https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/schedule/display.do?udc=oqwxbr4aun8n> to register to attend this free webinar.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/pcpi> to learn more about the PCPI.

## **6. AMA, European Union of Medical Specialists extend CME agreement**

The AMA and the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) renewed an agreement October 18 allowing U.S. physicians to convert continuing medical education (CME) credit certified by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education—the accrediting arm of the UEMS—to *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*<sup>™</sup>. The agreement, which started in 1999, has been expanded to include e-learning activities and also allows European physicians to use *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*<sup>™</sup> in European countries.

Among those who participated in the signing ceremony at AMA headquarters in Chicago were Susan Skochelak, MD, the AMA’s vice president of medical education; Alejandro Aparicio, MD, the AMA’s director of the division of continuing physician professional development; Michael Maves, MD, MBA, the AMA’s executive vice president and chief executive officer; Zlatko Fras, MD, UEMS president; and Bernard Maillet, MD, UEMS secretary general.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/education-careers/continuing-medical-education/physicians-recognition-award-credit-system/other-ways-earn-ama-pra-category/international-programs.shtml> to learn more about the agreement and how to submit an application and proof of participation to receive credit.

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**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
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## **7. Three-day course to spell out new vaccine developments**

Physicians can get a handle on newly available vaccines, vaccines in the pipeline and established vaccines essential to improving disease prevention efforts during the Clinical Vaccinology Course, November 5–7, at the Hyatt Regency Bethesda in Maryland.

The course—sponsored by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and the Emory Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases and the Emory Vaccine Center—will focus on new developments and issues related to the use of vaccines and feature leading experts, including representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Physicians can learn more about:

- How vaccines work
- Childhood immunization
- Clinical cases in vaccinology
- Special topics in vaccination
- Childhood, adolescent and adult immunization

Physicians can visit [www.nfid.org/conferences/course1110](http://www.nfid.org/conferences/course1110) to learn more and register for the course.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/flu> for a variety of immunization resources from the AMA.

### **8. AMA, NIH team up to help stop AIDS epidemic**

The AMA is working with the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) vaccinology continues to advance—to increase awareness on new directions in HIV vaccine research. The NIH may be reaching out to physicians when a candidate vaccine is identified for assistance with information dissemination, patient education and clinical trials.

“Be the Generation,” an initiative sponsored by the Division of AIDS of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the NIH, began in 2001 to find a safe and effective vaccine to help prevent the spread of HIV for stopping the AIDS epidemic. Visit <http://betheneration.nih.gov> to learn more about this collaborative effort.

### **9. New online program features prescribing for community-acquired pneumonia**

State and national prescribing information for community-acquired pneumonia as well as evidence-based treatment guidelines are discussed in the latest *AMA Therapeutic Insights*—a free online quarterly newsletter featuring a different disease in each issue. Aimed at enhancing physician knowledge and practice—and, ultimately, improving the quality of patient care—*AMA PRA Category 1 Credit*<sup>™</sup> is offered for each newsletter.

Physicians can visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/therapeuticinsights> to access this issue as well as previous issues featuring hypertension, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Alzheimer’s disease.

The American Medical Association is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### **10. Physicians can get free credits for evaluating molecular genetic test reports**

Physicians are invited to view and evaluate the test version of a new Web-based continuing medical education (CME) program that reviews the entire genetic testing process. Developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the RAND Corporation and the American Society for Clinical Pathology, the program reviews the genetic testing process from recognizing the patient who might benefit from a genetic test to the interpretation of the genetic test report.

Free CME credits will be awarded to physicians who complete the evaluation by November 30. The AMA participated in the advisory committee for the development of the program. Physicians can visit <http://www.ascp.org/RAND> to learn more.

### **11. Study finds sufficient ventilator supply in the United States**

In the first-ever comprehensive review of the supply of ventilators in the United States, a new study published on October 14 in the AMA's *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* journal suggests that the nation has enough full-feature mechanical ventilators to handle an emergency with similar severity to the 2009 influenza pandemic.

The study estimates that there are 62,188 full-feature mechanical ventilators, which is about 20 ventilators per 100,000 Americans. Nearly half were found to be pediatric and neonatal capable, which is more than has been previously estimated.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/disaster-medicine-ventilator-supply.shtml> to learn more about the study in an AMA news release.

### **12. What are the ethical challenges in cardiovascular medicine today?**

Practicing defensive medicine, using statins in pediatric patients, government intervention in diet and lifestyle choices and disparities in access to care are all dilemmas facing practicing cardiologists today. October's *Virtual Mentor*, the AMA's online ethics journal, explores ethical concerns that have been raised as a result of an expansion in research and clinical capabilities within cardiovascular medicine.

Physicians can visit <http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org> to view this month's issue and gain a better understanding of the ethical principles at stake.

### **13. In *American Medical News*: Physician shortage projected to soar in a decade**

Increases in residency positions are needed to counter the rising demand for Medicare and expanded coverage, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) says in an October 11 *American Medical News* article. According to new AAMC work force projections, nationwide

physician shortages are expected to reach 62,900 doctors in five years and 91,500 by 2020, *American Medical News* reports.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2010/10/11/prsb1011.htm?target=features4&source=amawire> to read more about the projected physician shortage.

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External links to Web sites and e-mail addresses are offered to provide readers with additional sources of news and information. The AMA is not responsible for the content contained in these external sources.

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter please send an e-mail to [AMA.Federation.News@ama-assn.org](mailto:AMA.Federation.News@ama-assn.org) or call (312) 464-4657.

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