

January 6, 2011

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TOP STORIES

1. Medicare sets physician payment rates in 2011

Following passage of the Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act of 2010—which President Obama signed on December 15—the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) adjusted its calculations of the 2011 Medicare payment rates that had been published in the final rule.

Last week, CMS issued a final 2011 conversion factor of \$33.9764 and provided new files to the Medicare carriers. The carriers have been testing the new files and are in the process of posting them to their websites. All 2011 claims are expected to be paid on time and at the correct rates with no adjustments or claims holds necessary.

Visit

<http://www.cms.gov/PhysicianFeeSched/PFSRVF/itemdetail.asp?filterType=none&filterByDID=0&sortByDID=1&sortOrder=descending&itemID=CMS1242727&intNumPerPage=10> to view the new payment schedule file. Download the zip file RVU11AR to view the final 2011 relative values, which are in the file PPRRVU11.xlsx. To learn more, visit <http://www.cms.gov/transmittals/downloads/R828OTN.pdf> and view instructions CMS sent to its carriers.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/medicarepaymentkit> and click on "Updated Medicare physician payment rates" for more.

2. AMA initiates search for new CEO

The AMA announced that it has retained Russell Reynolds Associates to assist the AMA in its search for its next executive vice president (EVP) and chief executive officer (CEO). The new hire will succeed current EVP/CEO Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, who is completing his contract in June 2011.

Russell Reynolds will assist a 10-member search committee, comprised of five members from the AMA House of Delegates and five members from the AMA Board of Trustees.

AMA House of Delegates members include: Willarda Edwards MD; Richard Geline, MD; David Holley, MD; Daniel Johnson, MD; and Jo Linder, MD. AMA Board of Trustees members include: Jeremy Lazarus, MD; Mary Anne McCaffree, MD; J. James Rohack, MD; Steven Stack, MD; and Robert Wah, MD.

Dr. Lazarus will serve as chair of the committee. The committee will interview top candidates and provide advice to the AMA Board of Trustees, which will select the CEO.

The AMA said it expects to have a candidate identified and hired before its next House of Delegates meeting scheduled for June 18-22, 2011, in Chicago.

3. Dial in February 2 for Office Hours with Dr. Wilson

Want an update on what's happening in Congress? Do you have a burning question you would like to ask the AMA? If you do, join AMA President Cecil B. Wilson, MD, for the next Office Hours with Dr. Wilson at 7 p.m. Eastern time February 2.

Office Hours is an hour-long conference call in which AMA members—and state and specialty medical society executives—can share their thoughts, concerns and suggestions with Dr. Wilson. Along with listening to your comments and answering your questions, Dr. Wilson will discuss the latest happenings in Congress. Visit <https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/schedule/display.do?udc=b0860bsosoxh> to register today.

FEDERATION NEWS

4. AMA shows revenue impact of averting Medicare cuts in each state

See the revenue impact of recent legislation to avert the sustainable growth rate-induced Medicare physician payment cuts by state per physician by viewing a chart from the AMA. The chart, at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/399/2011-sgr-impact-table.pdf>, shows the impact from December 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011.

5. New report presents information on medical professional liability insurance premiums

A new policy research perspective from the AMA presents information on medical professional liability insurance premiums from the Annual Rate Survey Issues of the *Medical Liability Monitor*, including the latest from October 2010.

An overview of the *Medical Liability Monitor* premium data suggests that the medical liability climate for physicians is much more favorable than it was during the most recent liability crisis. Two-thirds of the premiums reported to *Medical Liability Monitor* in 2010 were the same as in the previous year, which was by far the largest percentage of premiums with no change in recent years and much higher than the 13.2 percent that did not change from 2003 to 2004. In addition, premium increases occurred much less frequently toward the end of the 2003–2010 period, and when they did occur, they were smaller than at the start of the period.

While the overall picture is positive compared to that of a few years ago, the data also suggest that the market bears close watching. Since 2008, fewer premiums have fallen from one year to the next, and when premium decreases occurred, they were typically small; the majority were under 10 percent. Also, there was a slight uptick in premium increases in 2010—the first since the liability crisis. Importantly, given the magnitude of the increases of a few years ago, premiums remain high in many states.

The report is available to AMA members and select Federation staff members. Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/x-ama/upload/mm/363/prp2010-medical-liability-monitor.pdf> to view the report.

6. Don't miss the third and final PCPI webinar in new measure testing series

Are you planning to test your physician performance measures and want to know more about what types of results may come from the project and how those results may be used? State and specialty society employees as well as physicians are invited to attend "Measure Testing Projects: Sharing Results," at 1 p.m. Eastern time January 12.

Hosted by the AMA-convened Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement® (PCPI), the webinar will feature presentations by Keri Christensen, an AMA senior policy analyst; Erin Kaleba, director of research initiatives at the Alliance of Chicago Community Health Services; Adrienne Mims, MD, medical director for Medicare quality improvement at the Georgia Medical Care Foundation; and Kendra Hanley, an AMA project manager, who will highlight best practices from past measure-testing projects and address questions regarding measure testing. Questions to be addressed include:

- What does it mean if measures are feasible or not feasible?
- What does it mean if our measures are reliable or not reliable?
- What does it mean if our measures are valid or invalid?
- What sort of recommendations may come out of the testing project? How might these be used?
- What format should be used to present project findings?

Visit <https://cc.readytalk.com/r/eeagko34gk8i> to register to attend this free webinar.

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

PUBLIC HEALTH

7. Webinar to examine cholera, other public health issues in Haiti

One year later, what have we learned? That's the question to be answered during "Haiti update: Cholera and other public health issues," a webinar scheduled for 3 p.m. Eastern time January 12.

Sponsored by the AMA, the National Institutes of Health, the National Disaster Life Support Foundation and the AMA journal *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, the program will provide a general overview of the current status of public health and health care in Haiti following last January's earthquake. It also will offer a closer look at the basic clinical, epidemiological and public health aspects of cholera at the individual and population levels.

The program will help participants:

- Describe cholera and other public health issues in Haiti
- Identify appropriate public health and clinical interventions to both treat and prevent cholera

□ Utilize existing educational resources to enhance public health interventions for Haitian patients. Physicians can visit <https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/schedule/display.do?udc=g9df4utvg0bg> to register. Continuing medical education credit is available for this program.

8. Online program features prescribing for migraine

State and national prescribing information for migraine headaches, 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™* is offered for each newsletter.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/therapeuticinsights> to access this issue as well as previous issues featuring community-acquired pneumonia, 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.

9. What can we learn about patient safety from NASA? Find out during January 19 webinar

Over the years, NASA has had well-publicized successes and failures. By applying these lessons learned from its own experiences, as well as those of other high-reliability organizations, NASA has made safety an integral part of its culture.

Physicians can join the AMA at 1 p.m. Eastern time January 19 for a webinar featuring Gregg Bendrick, MD, chief medical officer at the NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, located at the Edwards Air Force Base in California. Dr. Bendrick's presentation, "High-reliability safety: applications to health care," will demonstrate how to apply to patient safety many of the lessons NASA has learned.

All physicians, nurses and other health professionals, as well as health professions students, educators and patient safety experts, are encouraged to participate. Cost is \$79 per site for AMA members and \$99 per site for nonmembers.

Visit <http://eo2.commpartners.com/users/ama/series.php?id=1118> to learn more and register.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

10. Celebrate heroes in medicine

Join the AMA Foundation for its annual Excellence in Medicine Awards reception and dinner February 8—during the AMA National Advocacy Conference—at the Grand Hyatt Washington in Washington, D.C. These awards, presented in association with Pfizer Inc, recognize those who exemplify the highest values of altruism, compassion, leadership and dedication to patient care. This year's award recipients include:

- Kathleen Casey, MD—Operation Giving Back, Chicago
- Mildred Olivier, MD—Midwest Glaucoma Center, Chicago
- Terrie Taylor, DO—Malaria Research Project, East Lansing, Mich., and Malawi, Africa
- Rodney Hood, MD—Multicultural Primary Care Medical Group, San Diego

- Charles Moore, MD—Health Education Assessment and Leadership Community Clinic, Atlanta
- Robert Bowers, MD—Volunteers in Medicine, Chattanooga, Inc., Chattanooga, Tenn.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/excellence-medicine-awards.shtml> to reserve your spot for the dinner by January 28 or to view a list of all award recipients.

11. Discover what's in "The Vault"

The recent opening of *American Medical News'* archives at amednews.com make available a rich resource for researchers and health care watchers. The site has more than 10 years of award-winning in-depth coverage of the trends and forces shaping health care.

Among the archival articles with relevance today are a three-part series on the evolution of Medicare's physician-payment morass, the story of one of the rare physicians to emerge victorious from a frivolous medical liability lawsuit, and the inspiring "Never too old to quit" with practical advice on how to help the elderly stop smoking.

Visit "From the Vault," at <http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/site/vault.htm>, and view a showcase of editors' picks featuring a special vault-treasures search tool. The site welcomes links to its content.

12. Give a gift that can make a world of difference

Consider giving a simple gift that can make a world of difference: a stethoscope. WorldScopes is a global, philanthropic initiative of the AMA Foundation that works with leading humanitarian organizations to collect and distribute stethoscopes to health care professionals in areas of need. Anyone can donate a new or gently used stethoscope or make a monetary donation in just minutes on the WorldScopes website.

"A stethoscope is among the most basic and essential medical instruments a physician uses, but in many parts of the world access to this important tool is severely limited, and many physicians have to treat the sick and suffering without it," said AMA President Cecil B. Wilson, MD. "WorldScopes has already donated more than 9,000 stethoscopes to health care professionals around the globe to help aid in the care of countless patients."

Visit the WorldScopes website at <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/worldscopes> to learn more or make a donation.

Visit <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/worldscopes-stethoscopes-donation.shtml> to view a full AMA news release about WorldScopes.

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 or call (312) 464-4657.

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