

Dermatology Coding Alert

BREAKING NEWS: Watch Out for Steep Cuts in January if CMS Has Its Way

Good news: Expect a boost in E/M reimbursement despite blanket cuts

Your reimbursement for services you bill to Medicare could take a sharp dive in January, especially if you bill for any imaging services.

Tough changes: CMS roared ahead in November with several controversial proposals in the final regulation for the physician fee schedule, including:

- A 5.0 percent cut to the conversion factor (down from 5.1 in the proposal)
- A cap on the technical component of imaging services at the hospital outpatient rate
- Sweeping changes to practice-expense RVUs, phased in over four years
- An across-the-board cut to work RVUs to pay for sharp increases in work RVUs for some evaluation and management codes.

Bright side: You should still notice some pretty "powerful" increases in your reimbursement for mid-level E/M codes, in spite of the cut to the conversion factor and the across-the-board reduction in work RVUs.

Keep up-to-date: Watch for more on the fee schedule changes and how they will affect your billing in the next issue of Medical Office Billing & Collections Alert.