

## **Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert**

### **EXPENSES: To Keep Physician Expense Data Fresh, CMS Needs A New Approach, Group Says**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services needs to find a new data source to account for changes in physician expenditures after 2000, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission states.

In comments on CMS' 2004 [Physician Fee Schedule](#) regulation, MedPAC warned that the most recent American Medical Association survey on physician expenses, which CMS uses to determine the Medicare Economic Index, only goes up to 2000, and the AMA has no plans to conduct it again. For future years, CMS may want to consider a collaborative approach involving the AMA, specialty physician societies, and federal agencies.

Meanwhile, MedPAC says CMS' planned move away from plain capitation of outpatient maintenance dialysis services for patients with end-stage renal disease may not be such a great idea. CMS plans instead to pay more if the physician sees the patient four times or more per month, and less for months with fewer visits. It'll be hard to measure the impact of this change on quality and access without "baseline data" to compare with, MedPAC says.