

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Medicare Is Failing Docs, ACP Says

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** talks a good reform game, but the **American College of Physicians** says CMS should be doing the following things to make doctors' lives easier, according to a new policy framework.

1. Cut back on paperwork. ACP says Medicare's "excessive" paperwork requirements don't allow physicians enough time to sustain the level of communication and trust that leads to better care and fewer medical errors.
2. Fix payment mess. Although Congress hopes to pass another short-term pay increase this year, a 5 percent payment cut still looms. The ACP says that policymakers need to act immediately to stabilize Medicare physician payments permanently.
3. Provide tech incentives. The ACP proposes a National Health Information Incentive Act to fund physicians who invest in electronic medical records and other technology that fosters quality improvement.
4. Promote quality. The ACP complains that Medicare's pay-for-performance demonstration covers only a small number of practices in four states - and not all will be eligible for bonuses. Instead, CMS should include more doctors in more states - and incentives for all.

Read the report at www.acponline.org/hpp/state_nation05.pdf.