

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### PHYSICIAN NOTES: Doctors With Abundant Resources At Their Fingertips Less Happy Than Others

#### Survey proves once and for all that money can't buy happiness

Doctors in areas with more medical resources are less satisfied with the quality of care in their areas than doctors in resource-poor areas, **Dartmouth Medical School** researchers found in a survey.

There's a simple explanation, however. The researchers said abundant supply of medical facilities leads to increased demand for resources, such as specialists and medical tests, which limits availability, the researchers told the Chicago Tribune. More health spending doesn't lead to happier doctors or better care, according to the study to be published in the *Annals Of Internal Medicine*.

#### In other news:

- The Senate won't pass a bill that aims to ease overcrowding in hospital Emergency Departments, Senate Majority Leader **Bill Frist** (R-TN) told the **American College of Emergency Physicians** according to CQ Daily. Senators need to learn more about the issue of ED overcrowding before they can pass legislation, Frist said. The bill would have increased Medicare payments for ED services by \$100 million, set up federal standards on the amount of time an ED could hold onto a patient and offered higher pay to hospitals that met the standards.

Frist also told ACEP that he would "continue to work very hard" to avert the 4.6-percent physician payment cut scheduled for 2007.

- The **House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee** passed a bill to establish national standards on privacy and usage of electronic health records. The bill also promises to lead to national standards on medical data storage and interoperability.

- Houston physician **Linda Kaye Morgan** was sentenced to 10 years in prison without parole and charged with a \$7.9 million repayment. Prosecutors said marketers paid the unlicensed Morgan \$250 for each pre-printed prescription she provided for motorized wheelchairs, plus certificates of medical necessity. She rarely examined the patients for whom she signed prescriptions, they alleged.

- The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** made slight changes to the wording of three codes in the oncology demonstration project, in Transmittal 963, dated May 26. The transmittal also adds several non-covered Category II codes and "G" codes to the physician fee schedule database.

- Medicare's error rate is improving, according to the latest **Comprehensive Error Rate Testing** program report. The mid-year error rate was only 5.1 percent, down from 5.2 percent in 2005 and 10.1 percent in 2004. CMS found \$11.9 billion in overpayments and \$1.2 billion in underpayments.