

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

### **RVU Update: E/M and Inpatient Visits, Consults Hit Hard by 2004 RVU Changes**

Among the dozens of CPT Codes targeted for cutbacks in the 2004 fee schedule are 46 codes that begin with 99, according to a chart in the new final regulation.

The 4.5 percent cut, combined with some adjustments to RVUs, has resulted in a sledgehammer hit to evaluation and management codes, inpatient visit codes, and consult codes, among others. Hardest hit will be high-level E/M codes for new patients (99205) and existing patients (99215), which will drop 4 percent each.

Nursing facility (99301-99303) and home visits (99348 and 99350) will drop 5 percent each.

Physicians will actually see an increase in the first hour of critical care (99291) in the inpatient setting, from \$210.05 to \$229.07. But the next half-hour of critical care (99292) will drop from \$107.78 to \$101.19 to compensate.

Treatment of retinal lesion (67210) will drop from \$604.59 to \$544.58. Also, upper GI endoscopy (43239) will drop from \$337.69 to \$305.31, and lesion-removal colonoscopy (45385) will drop from \$545.53 to \$471.85. Destruction of a benign or premalignant lesion (17000) will drop from \$61.43 to \$57.27.