

Next steps in primary care

ISSUE: The Commission has a long-standing concern that the Medicare fee schedule for physicians and other health professionals undervalues primary care relative to specialty care. The Commission is also concerned that the fee schedule is not well-suited for primary care because it is oriented towards discrete encounters rather than ongoing, non-face-to-face care coordination for a panel of patients. Motivated by those concerns, the Commission, in its March 2015 report, recommended that the Congress establish a per-beneficiary payment for primary care to replace the expiring Primary Care Incentive Payment program. In a subsequent discussion at our November 2015 meeting, Commissioners expressed interest in taking additional steps to increase payment for primary care under Medicare.

KEY POINTS: The Commission is continuing to examine ways to better support primary care.

ACTION: Commissioners should review the draft paper in preparation for a discussion at the January meeting.

STAFF CONTACT: Ariel Winter and Kevin Hayes (202-220-3700)