

Rebalancing the physician fee schedule towards ambulatory evaluation and management services

ISSUE: The Commission has a long-standing concern that the Medicare fee schedule for physicians and other health professionals undervalues ambulatory evaluation and management (E&M) visits relative to other services, which contributes to much lower compensation for primary care clinicians and other specialties that focus on E&M visits relative to specialties that focus on procedures, imaging, and tests. The Commission has made several recommendations over the years to increase payment for ambulatory E&M services and better support primary care clinicians.

KEY POINTS: The Commission is continuing to examine ways to rebalance the fee schedule towards ambulatory E&M services.

ACTION: Commissioners should review these issues in preparation for a discussion at the January meeting.