

Options for slowing the growth of Medicare fee-for-service spending for emergency department services

ISSUE: In recent years, service use has grown faster in hospital emergency departments (EDs) than in physician offices. At the same time, the share of ED visits that are coded as high acuity has increased.

KEY POINTS: The Commission has been exploring Medicare beneficiaries' use of EDs and urgent care centers (UCCs) for non-urgent services. In addition, the Commission has been analyzing ED coding to determine if the increase in coding high-acuity visits reflects real change in the patients treated in EDs.

ACTION: Commissioners will discuss and vote on a draft recommendation.