

Medicare policy issues related to non-urgent and emergency care

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

ACTION: Staff seek feedback from Commissioners on the results we present and on next steps.