

Beneficiary access to hospital care, and how service volume affects hospital costs

ISSUE: As part of our framework for evaluating payment adequacy, we examine Medicare beneficiaries' access to care, hospitals access to capital, and other trends. Collectively, this set of measures provides an overview of the trends in hospital service capacity and the general availability of hospital services to Medicare beneficiaries.

KEY POINTS: Overall, these measures suggest that beneficiary access to hospital services remains good. Hospital inpatient volume has declined resulting in excess capacity in some markets.

ACTION: Commissioners should review and discuss this material in the context of forthcoming analyses of adequacy of Medicare payments to hospitals.

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