

Next steps in continuing to support primary care

ISSUE: The Commission has a long-standing concern that primary care is undervalued by the Medicare fee schedule for physicians and other health professionals (“the fee schedule”) compared to specialty care. The Commission has also become concerned that the fee schedule is an ill-suited payment mechanism for primary care. The fee schedule is oriented toward discrete services and procedures that have a definite beginning and end. Ideally, a major component of primary care services would include on-going, 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 (PCIP).

KEY POINTS: The Commission is continuing its work in examining ways to reform fee schedule payment for primary care.

ACTION: Commissioners should provide staff with comments on the discussion draft.

STAFF CONTACT: Julie Somers and Kevin Hayes (202-220-3700).