

Medicare Advantage coding intensity and health risk assessments

ISSUE: Differences in diagnostic coding intensity have led to Medicare Advantage risk scores and payments to Medicare Advantage plans that are higher than they would have been for the same person in Medicare fee-for-service. Health risk assessments help identify health risks and refer patients for follow-up care through a framework which focuses on preventive care, health promotion, and disease management. The number of health risk assessments provided in Medicare Advantage enrollees' homes has grown significantly in recent years.

KEY POINTS: We present findings on the use of health risk assessments by Medicare Advantage plans, variation of use across Medicare Advantage plans, and the extent to which diagnoses identified only through a health risk assessment affect payments to Medicare Advantage organizations.

ACTION: Commissioners will discuss additional work on this issue.

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