

Updating payments for physician services and ambulatory surgical centers

ISSUE: In the March 2009 report, the Commission will analyze payment adequacy and updates for physician services and ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs).

KEY POINTS: We examine several factors to determine whether Medicare payments for physician services are adequate. These include beneficiary access to physician services, private insurer rates compared to Medicare rates, and volume growth. In our analysis, we also examine how costs are likely to change in 2010 and discuss payment update recommendation. We will also examine ways to change fee schedule payments for expensive imaging services.

In a subsequent session we will examine trends in ambulatory surgical centers and discuss payment recommendations for this sector.

ACTION: Commissioners should review the findings in preparation for making payment recommendations to Congress.

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