

CMS RELEASES 2020 MEDICARE HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT PROPOSED RULE

CMS recently released the 2020 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (HOPPS) proposed rule that provides Medicare facility payments to hospital outpatient departments. CMS proposes to update HOPPS payment rates by 2.7% overall in 2020.

There are no Ambulatory Payment Classification (APC) reassignments proposed for radiation oncology related procedures, which results in payment increases in 2020 for most procedures. Medical physics consultation codes 77336 & 77370 have a proposed payment increase of 3.8%. Brachytherapy source (i.e. seeds) reimbursement continues to fluctuate from year to year with both proposed increases and decreases in radioisotope payments.

The proposed rule includes a number of policies that reduce payment differences between certain outpatient sites of service so that patients can benefit from high-quality care at lower costs, and are able to receive care that is provided safely and is clinically appropriate.

CMS continues the site-neutral payment rate finalized in 2019 for hospital outpatient clinic visits that is equivalent to what those visits would be paid under Medicare's physician fee schedule. According to the agency, the policy lowered copayments for

beneficiaries and costs for CMS. Without the policy, CMS says, beneficiaries would have paid an average of \$23 for a clinic visit in an off-campus provider-based department in 2019 but instead paid \$16. With the proposed rule, CMS estimates that beneficiaries will save an average of \$14 for every off-campus department clinic visit, resulting in an estimated \$810 million in savings for 2020.

The proposed rule would implement an executive order signed by President Donald Trump last month that gave the Department of Health and Human Services 60 days to propose a rule requiring hospitals to publicly post standard charge information, including negotiated rates and rates for common items and services, in a consumer-friendly format.

For additional information including a detailed HOPPS rule summary and 2020 proposed hospital outpatient payments and impacts, go to:

aapm.org/government_affairs/CMS/2020HealthPolicyUpdate.asp ■