Multiple Procedure Payment Reduction in Proposed Rule
The recently released CMS 2013 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule includes an expansion of multiple procedure payment reduction (MPPR) policy that would negatively impact payment by imposing a 25 percent payment reduction on the technical component for the less expensive service if more than one service is provided on the same day to the same patient. The ACC has reviewed the expanded MPPR policy and believes a payment reduction is not the appropriate course of action. Thanks to the grassroots efforts of ACC members, 60 members of Congress recently signed on to a House Energy and Commerce Committee letter. Members Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and John Barrow (D-GA) to CMS Acting Administrator Marilyn Tavenner opposing the proposed MPPR expansion. CMS’ decision will be part of the final rule, which is due out in late October/early November. Stay tuned to The ACC Advocate newsletter for details.
Can Docs Fix the Problems?

I went to sleep on election night with overwhelming state and national budget deficits, a projected fiscal cliff of increasing tax rates and sequestered spending cuts, a possible 58% total cut in Cardiology reimbursement rates, and an uncertain health-care future or even direction. The next morning I woke up to find that both my state and national-elected representatives were now physicians (Bera, Pan).

OK, the elections are over. Now What? Instead of celebrating or licking our wounds, it is time to get to work on addressing health-care reform. The recent Supreme Court Decisions, Presidential Re-election, and Senate majority along with California’s in-state super-majority make health care reform a fact of life. California was the first state to pass legislation implementing the regulated insurance exchanges under the Affordable Care Act (Covered California-Accenture), and next month our governor intends to call a special legislative session on health-care reform.

Now is the time for our CAACC team members and leaders to contact their local representatives and offer help in formulating new health-care legislation. This month we are asking our district councilors and interested members to meet with their own representatives. If your Cardiovascular Team can manage complex medical problems, they can also recognize the capabilities, limitations, and faults of our current medical and payment systems and identify possible solutions. We will also be recruiting our FIT members (Future of Cardiology) to get an early start and contribute to this effort. And lastly, our patients (Mended Hearts) can help in defining the benefits and issues they face on a daily basis. Our complete team of physicians, nurses, PAs, NPAs, FITs, administrators, and patients can have a large and lasting effect on your legislator’s decisions. Your interest and willingness to participate will be appreciated and welcomed by these representatives. Let’s get our best teams on the field this month.

Then, everyone is invited to join us on our CAACC Legislation Day (April 2013) in Sacramento. We will be discussing new legislation sponsored or endorsed by CAACC, as well as important in-committee assembly and senate health-care bills. We will then walk to the Capitol to meet with important committee members and your representatives. Our CAACC teams partnering with our elected leaders and representatives will be required to deal with these new challenges. The Legislative Day will be capped by an introduction to our new California Million Hearts Program. Please join us on CAACC Legislation Day. Maybe Docs can make a difference.

Click here to find your state senators and assembly members.
News from ACC National

Blog Post Focuses on Readmission Penalties

The unintended consequences of readmission penalties are explored in a recent ACC in Touch Blog post. Judy Tingley, MPH, RN, member of the ACC's Clinical Quality Committee, warns health care professionals to brace for impact following the CMS readmission payment penalties that went into effect on Oct. 1.

This early in the game, the consequences of these financial penalties on more than 2,200 hospitals with readmission rates above the national averages are "yet to be determined." However, it's clear that "safety net" hospitals will be impacted the most. ACC's Hospital to Home (H2H) program is hard at work to reduce all-cause readmissions among patients with heart failure or acute myocardial infarction in hospitals across the country. Read more about readmissions and H2H.

ACC Returns to the White House

In early October, ACC member and Washington, DC, Chapter Governor Stuart Seides, MD, FACC, joined several physician specialist groups at the White House to discuss delivery system transformation. Several of President Obama's top health care advisors joined the discussion, including Richard Gilfillan, MD, director of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, Jeanne Lambrew, deputy assistant to the president for health policy, Jon Blum, deputy administrator and director of Medicare at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Nancy Nielsen, MD, PhD, senior advisor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. During the course of the discussion, Seides had the opportunity to highlight the exciting programs the College has implemented that achieve both improved care coordination and high quality efficient health care, including the Imaging in FOCUS initiative, the National Cardiovascular Data Registry (NCDR®) and PINNACLE Registry®, and the SMARTCare program.

ACC CEO Search Underway

The College is now soliciting applications for the Chief Executive Officer with the first interviews beginning in early December. The College has selected Korn/Ferry International to work with the College’s Search Committee.
The American College of Cardiology (ACC) exclusively endorses The Doctors Company, the nation’s largest medical malpractice insurer. This malpractice insurance program through the ACC is the first to focus on general cardiologists, interventional cardiologists, cardiothoracic surgeons, and pediatric and adult congenital cardiologists. Together we identify areas for improvement in the treatment of people with heart disease, educate members about clinical events identified as high risk, and provide members with patient safety tools and programs. The Doctors Company offers ACC members a unique combination of coverage features, aggressive claims defense, superior protection, and unrivaled rewards, including the Tribute® Plan, a financial benefit that rewards doctors for their loyalty and their dedication to superior patient care. More benefits for ACC members include:

- Program discount of 5 percent with a favorable claims history
- Claims-free credit of up to 25 percent for eligible members
- Credit of 5 percent for participating in the PINNACLE Registry®
- Credit of 5 percent for participation in maintenance of certification

To take advantage of these exclusive savings, call (888) 312-8571.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out our website at caacc.org for details on all events.

Dec. 4: FREE live Webinar: “What’s New in CMS Value-Based Purchasing?”
  Time: Noon-1 pm PST
Dec. 7: Arrhythmia Symposium at the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute: Focus on Sudden Cardiac Arrest, 8 am, Los Angeles
Dec. 8: Chapter 62, Mended Hearts of San Diego Meeting, 10 am, San Diego
Dec. 13: Fellows in Training Career Training Program, 6 pm, San Francisco
Dec. 14-16: 29th Annual Advances in Heart Disease, San Francisco
Dec. 19: Preventive Cardiology of Orange County (PCOC), 6:30 pm, Irvine
California Fellow-in-Training Testimonials

Jamal S. Rana MD, PhD, Consultant, Division of Cardiology, East Bay Kaiser Permanente, California
I want to report to you that I successfully completed my 3 month CMR course at Royal Brompton Hospital in London earlier this month. It was a great honor for me to be the CA ACC BCS Fellow in Cardiac Imaging for the year 2011-12. I must mention the strong mentorship, guidance and support of Dr. Berman and very gracious acceptance of Dr. Pennell in his course, to make this collaborative effort continue. The CMR course at Royal Brompton is without doubt one of the best in the world and is unparalleled in its educational scope. I am also grateful to all the faculty and support staff of the CMR unit. I want to thank everyone again for providing me with such a unique educational opportunity in an increasingly global and collaborative environment.

Christopher Chu
The 2012 ACC Legislative Conference has been one of the most unique and eye-opening experiences I have ever had. As a fellow-in-training I am often so focused on learning about cardiovascular pathophysiology and honing my clinical skills that I forget that advocacy is also a critical responsibility of all practicing cardiologists. At the Legislative Conference I learned that there are not only major issues impeding our ability to practice quality cardiovascular medicine but there are also major issues facing the country. With the debt ceiling rapidly approaching, a very large federal deficit and a deeply divided Congress it seems that many of the issues affecting cardiology such as a permanent SGR fix, sequestration and medical malpractice will not be adequately addressed. However, if cardiologists give up their voice in advocating for these issues and our profession, then the attention and limited resources our country currently has will be diverted elsewhere. I would like to thank the CA ACC for helping to make my attendance at the 2012 ACC Legislative Conference possible.

Rashmee Shah
“With the support of the California Chapter of the ACC, I was able to attend the legislative meeting in Washington DC. The lectures, meetings, and trip to Capitol Hill taught me the importance of physician involvement in health care reform. The current economic climate requires that we strategically use our federal health dollars to provide care to our patients. Physicians must play a role in determining the most valuable use of these dollars. As a fellow in training, I was able to meet leaders in the field and learn how I can be involved now, and throughout my career. Thank you for supporting fellows in training!

Amit Prasad MD/MBA, 2nd Year Cardiology Fellow, Kaiser Permanente San Francisco
Having the opportunity to attend- as part of the California ACC delegation- the three day national legislative conference in Washington DC was an eye opening experience to the rapidly changing health care environment which our cardiovascular community will be continuing to navigate. The 2012 ACC Legislative Conference, which was held on September 10-11th in Washington D.C., consisted of a first day with sessions covering the state of cardiology and a legislative issues briefing on the ongoing payment reform efforts dealing with the SGR and Medicare sequestration. On Day 2, nearly 350 cardiovascular professionals visited the Hill and engaged in active discussion with our respective state congressional delegations. It was clear by the end of this important conference that if Cardiologist and other healthcare providers would like to protect the quality of care for Medicare beneficiaries we need to continue to be constantly proactive with our advocacy efforts on the Hill.
Congratulations to our 2012 Elliot Rapaport Cardiologist of the Year, Daniel Berman, MD, FACC

CA ACC President William Bommer, MD, FACC and Daniel Berman, MD, FACC, September 22, 2012.

ICD-10 Date is Official

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) finalized a proposed one-year delay for ICD-10 compliance, officially setting the deadline to Oct. 1, 2014. HHS confirmed the deadline while announcing the establishment of a unique health plan identifier, a new health care standard that stems from the ACA. Find out what you need to know about ICD-10.