



September 20, 2018

Each letter was personalized by state and Senator

Dear Senator Stabenow:

Recently, Senators Cassidy (R-LA) and Brown (D-OH) began circulating a letter to CMS Administrator Seema Verma urging her to withdraw the proposed consolidation of payments for Evaluation and Management (E/M) Codes included in the 2019 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule.

On behalf of the Advocacy Council of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology and the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology and the A/I physicians and their patients in Michigan I am writing to encourage you to sign onto the Cassidy/Brown letter.

As Allergy/Immunology specialists, we see and treat patients with highly complex medical problems. So-called "simple" asthma/allergy patients are seen and treated by primary care physicians and the more complex or complicated patients are referred to us for diagnosis and treatment.

Because we treat the more complex cases, our patient visits tend to be longer and involve a considerable amount of face-to-face time with our patients. Then, once we have determined the cause of the problem, we often have lengthy counseling sessions with these patients, working with them to come up with a treatment plan that will help them better manage their asthma or allergies.

CMS acknowledges that A/I physicians see a higher percentage of complex patients who require longer visits. We appreciate that CMS recommends we receive an add-on payment of \$14.00 in recognition of the higher than average number of complex (Level 4 and 5) visits. This add-on payment would help narrow the gap between what we currently receive for care provided to Medicare patients and what we anticipate A/I physicians would receive under the proposed consolidation. But there would still be a gap.

The Advocacy Council would welcome the opportunity to work with CMS to come up with a solution that truly fixes the problems with the E/M codes and the associated payments. This particular proposal is NOT the answer.

For these reasons, we urge you to sign onto the Cassidy/Brown letter urging CMS to withdraw the E/M consolidation proposal.

Sincerely,

Stephen Imbeau

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