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42 U.S. Code § 1395w-4

Payment for physicians' services

(a) Payment based on fee schedule

(1) In general

Effective for all physicians' services (as defined in subsection (j)(3)) furnished under this part during a year (beginning with 1992) for which payment is otherwise made on the basis of a reasonable charge or on the basis of a fee schedule under section 1395m(b) of this title, payment under this part shall instead be based on the lesser of—

(A) the actual charge for the service, or

(B) subject to the succeeding provisions of this subsection, the amount determined under the fee schedule established under subsection (b) for services furnished during that year (in this subsection referred to as the "fee schedule amount").

(2) Transition to full fee schedule

(A) Limiting reductions and increases to 15 percent in 1992

(i) Limit on increase

In the case of a service in a fee schedule area (as defined in subsection (j)(2)) for which the adjusted historical payment basis (as defined in subparagraph (D)) is less than 85 percent of the fee schedule amount for services furnished in 1992, there shall be substituted for the fee schedule amount an amount equal to the adjusted historical payment basis plus 15 percent of the fee schedule amount otherwise established (without regard to this paragraph).

(ii) Limit in reduction

In the case of a service in a fee schedule area for which the adjusted historical payment basis exceeds 115 percent of the fee schedule amount for services furnished in 1992, there shall be substituted for the fee schedule amount an amount equal to the adjusted historical payment basis minus 15 percent of the fee schedule amount otherwise established (without regard to this paragraph).

(B) Special rule for 1993, 1994, and 1995

If a physicians' service in a fee schedule area is subject to the provisions of subparagraph (A) in 1992, for physicians' services furnished in the area—

(i) during 1993, there shall be substituted for the fee schedule amount an amount equal to the sum of—

(I) 75 percent of the fee schedule amount determined under subparagraph (A), adjusted by the update established under subsection (d)(3) for 1993, and

(II) 25 percent of the fee schedule amount determined under paragraph (1) for 1993 without regard to this paragraph;

(ii) during 1994, there shall be substituted for the fee schedule amount an amount equal to the sum of—

(I) 67 percent of the fee schedule amount determined under clause (i), adjusted by the update

established under subsection (d)(3) for 1994 and as adjusted under subsection (c)(2)(F)(ii) and under section 13515(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, and

(II) 33 percent of the fee schedule amount determined under paragraph (1) for 1994 without regard to this paragraph; and

(iii) during 1995, there shall be substituted for the fee schedule amount an amount equal to the sum of—

(I) 50 percent of the fee schedule amount determined under clause (ii) adjusted by the update established under subsection (d)(3) for 1995, and

(II) 50 percent of the fee schedule amount determined under paragraph (1) for 1995 without regard to this paragraph.

(C) Special rule for anesthesia and radiology services

With respect to physicians' services which are anesthesia services, the Secretary shall provide for a transition in the same manner as a transition is provided for other services under subparagraph (B). With respect to radiology services, "109 percent" and "9 percent" shall be substituted for "115 percent" and "15 percent", respectively, in subparagraph (A)(ii).

(D) "Adjusted historical payment basis" defined

(i) In general

In this paragraph, the term "adjusted historical payment basis" means, with respect to a physicians' service furnished in a fee schedule area, the weighted average prevailing charge applied in the area for the service in 1991 (as determined by the Secretary without regard to physician specialty and as adjusted to reflect payments for services with customary charges below the prevailing charge or other payment limitations imposed by law or regulation) adjusted by the update established under subsection (d)(3) for 1992.

(ii) Application to radiology services

In applying clause (i) in the case of physicians' services which are radiology services (including radiologist services, as defined in section 1395m(b)(6) of this title), but excluding nuclear medicine services that are subject to section 6105(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989, there shall be substituted for the weighted average prevailing charge the amount provided under the fee schedule established for the service for the fee schedule area under section 1395m(b) of this title.

(iii) Nuclear medicine services

In applying clause (i) in the case of physicians' services which are nuclear medicine services, there shall be substituted for the weighted average prevailing charge the amount provided under section 6105(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989.

(3) Incentives for participating physicians and suppliers

In applying paragraph (1)(B) in the case of a nonparticipating physician or a nonparticipating supplier or other person, the fee schedule amount shall be 95 percent of such amount otherwise applied under this subsection (without regard to this paragraph). In the case of physicians' services (including services which the Secretary excludes pursuant to subsection (j)(3)) of a nonparticipating physician, supplier, or other person for which payment is made under this part on a basis other than the fee schedule amount, the payment shall be based on 95 percent of the payment basis for such services furnished by a participating physician, supplier, or other person.

(4) Special rule for medical direction

(A) In general

With respect to physicians' services furnished on or after January 1, 1994, and consisting of medical direction of two, three, or four concurrent anesthesia cases, except as provided in paragraph (5), the fee schedule amount to be applied shall be equal to one-half of the amount described in subparagraph (B).

(B) Amount

The amount described in this subparagraph, for a physician's medical direction of the performance of anesthesia services, is the following percentage of the fee schedule amount otherwise applicable under this section if the anesthesia services were personally performed by the physician alone:

(i) For services furnished during 1994, 120 percent.

(ii) For services furnished during 1995, 115 percent.

(iii) For services furnished during 1996, 110 percent.

(iv) For services furnished during 1997, 105 percent.

(v) For services furnished after 1997, 100 percent.

(5) Incentives for electronic prescribing

(A) Adjustment

(i) In general

Subject to subparagraph (B) and subsection (m)(2)(B), with respect to covered professional services furnished by an eligible professional during 2012, 2013 or 2014, if the eligible professional is not a successful electronic prescriber for the reporting period for the year (as determined under subsection (m)(3)(B)), the fee schedule amount for such services furnished by such professional during the year (including the fee schedule amount for purposes of determining a payment based on such amount) shall be equal to the applicable percent of the fee schedule amount that would otherwise apply to such services under this subsection (determined after application of paragraph (3) but without regard to this paragraph).

(ii) Applicable percent

For purposes of clause (i), the term "applicable percent" means—

(I) for 2012, 99 percent;

(II) for 2013, 98.5 percent; and

(III) for 2014, 98 percent.

(B) Significant hardship exception

The Secretary may, on a case-by-case basis, exempt an eligible professional from the application of the payment adjustment under subparagraph (A) if the Secretary determines, subject to annual renewal, that compliance with the requirement for being a successful electronic prescriber would result in a significant hardship, such as in the case of an eligible professional who practices in a rural area without sufficient Internet access.

(C) Application

(i) Physician reporting system rules

Paragraphs (5), (6), and (8) of subsection (k) shall apply for purposes of this paragraph in the same manner as they apply for purposes of such subsection.

(ii) Incentive payment validation rules

Clauses (ii) and (iii) of subsection (m)(5)(D) shall apply for purposes of this paragraph in a similar manner as they apply for purposes of such subsection.

(D) Definitions

For purposes of this paragraph:

(i) Eligible professional; covered professional services

The terms "eligible professional" and "covered professional services" have the meanings given such terms in subsection (k)(3).

(ii) Physician reporting system

The term "physician reporting system" means the system established under subsection (k).

(iii) Reporting period

The term "reporting period" means, with respect to a year, a period specified by the Secretary.

(6) Special rule for teaching anesthesiologists

With respect to physicians' services furnished on or after January 1, 2010, in the case of teaching anesthesiologists involved in the training of physician residents in a single anesthesia case or two concurrent anesthesia cases, the fee schedule amount to be applied shall be 100 percent of the fee schedule amount otherwise applicable under this section if the anesthesia services were personally performed by the teaching anesthesiologist alone and paragraph (4) shall not apply if—

(A) the teaching anesthesiologist is present during all critical or key portions of the anesthesia service or procedure involved; and

(B) the teaching anesthesiologist (or another anesthesiologist with whom the teaching anesthesiologist has entered into an arrangement) is immediately available to furnish anesthesia services during the entire procedure.

(7) Incentives for meaningful use of certified EHR technology

(A) Adjustment

(i) In general

Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (D), with respect to covered professional services furnished by an eligible professional during each of 2015 through 2018, if the eligible professional is not a meaningful EHR user (as determined under subsection (*o*)(2)) for an EHR reporting period for the year, the fee schedule amount for such services furnished by such professional during the year (including the fee schedule amount for purposes of determining a payment based on such amount) shall be equal to the applicable percent of the fee schedule amount that would otherwise apply to such services under this subsection (determined after application of paragraph (3) but without regard to this paragraph).

(ii) Applicable percent

Subject to clause (iii), for purposes of clause (i), the term "applicable percent" means—

(I) for 2015, 99 percent (or, in the case of an eligible professional who was subject to the application of the payment adjustment under subsection (a)(5) for 2014, 98 percent);

(II) for 2016, 98 percent; and

(III) for 2017 and 2018, 97 percent.

(iii) Authority to decrease applicable percentage for 2018

For 2018, if the Secretary finds that the proportion of eligible professionals who are meaningful EHR users (as determined under subsection (*o*)(2)) is less than 75 percent, the applicable percent shall be decreased by 1 percentage point from the applicable percent in the preceding year.

(B) Significant hardship exception

The Secretary may, on a case-by-case basis (and, with respect to the payment adjustment under subparagraph (A) for 2017, for categories of eligible professionals, as established by the Secretary and posted on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services prior to December 15, 2015, an application for which must be submitted to the Secretary by not later than March 15, 2016), exempt an eligible professional from the application of the payment adjustment under subparagraph (A) if the Secretary determines, subject to annual renewal, that compliance with the requirement for being a meaningful EHR user would result in a significant hardship, such as in the case of an eligible professional who practices in a rural area without sufficient Internet access. The Secretary shall exempt an eligible professional from the application of the payment adjustment under subparagraph (A) with respect to a year, subject to annual renewal, if the Secretary determines that compliance with the requirement for being a meaningful EHR user is not possible because the certified EHR technology used by such professional has been decertified under a program kept or recognized pursuant to section 300jj–11(c)(5) of this title. In no case may an eligible professional be granted an exemption under this subparagraph for more than 5 years.

(C) Application of physician reporting system rules

Paragraphs (5), (6), and (8) of subsection (k) shall apply for purposes of this paragraph in the same manner as they apply for purposes of such subsection.

(D) Non-application to hospital-based and ambulatory surgical center-based eligible professionals

(i) Hospital-based

No payment adjustment may be made under subparagraph (A) in the case of hospital-based eligible professionals (as defined in subsection (*o*)(1)(C)(ii)).

(ii) Ambulatory surgical center-based

Subject to clause (iv), no payment adjustment may be made under subparagraph (A) for 2017 and 2018 in the case of an eligible professional with respect to whom substantially all of the covered professional services furnished by such professional are furnished in an ambulatory surgical center.

(iii) Determination

The determination of whether an eligible professional is an eligible professional described in clause (ii) may be made on the basis of—

(I) the site of service (as defined by the Secretary); or

(II) an attestation submitted by the eligible professional.

Determinations made under subclauses (I) and (II) shall be made without regard to any employment or billing arrangement between the eligible professional and any other supplier or provider of services.

(iv) Sunset

Clause (ii) shall no longer apply as of the first year that begins more than 3 years after the date on which the Secretary determines, through notice and comment rulemaking, that certified EHR technology applicable to the ambulatory surgical center setting is available.

(E) Definitions

For purposes of this paragraph:

(i) Covered professional services

The term "covered professional services" has the meaning given such term in subsection (k)(3).

(ii) EHR reporting period

The term "EHR reporting period" means, with respect to a year, a period (or periods) specified by the Secretary.

(iii) Eligible professional

The term "eligible professional" means a physician, as defined in section 1395x(r) of this title.

(8) Incentives for quality reporting

(A) Adjustment

(i) In general

With respect to covered professional services furnished by an eligible professional during each of 2015 through 2018, if the eligible professional does not satisfactorily submit data on quality measures for covered professional services for the quality reporting period for the year (as determined under subsection (m)(3)(A)), the fee schedule amount for such services furnished by such professional during the year (including the fee schedule amount for purposes of determining a payment based on such amount) shall be equal to the applicable percent of the fee schedule amount that would otherwise apply to such services under this subsection (determined after application of paragraphs (3), (5), and (7), but without regard to this paragraph).

(ii) Applicable percent

For purposes of clause (i), the term "applicable percent" means—

(I) for 2015, 98.5 percent; and

(II) for 2016, 2017, and 2018, 98 percent.

(B) Application

(i) Physician reporting system rules

Paragraphs (5), (6), and (8) of subsection (k) shall apply for purposes of this paragraph in the same manner as they apply for purposes of such subsection.

(ii) Incentive payment validation rules

Clauses (ii) and (iii) of subsection (m)(5)(D) shall apply for purposes of this paragraph in a similar manner as they apply for purposes of such subsection.

(C) Definitions

For purposes of this paragraph:

(i) Eligible professional; covered professional services

The terms "eligible professional" and "covered professional services" have the meanings given such terms in subsection (k)(3).

(ii) Physician reporting system

The term "physician reporting system" means the system established under subsection (k).

(iii) Quality reporting period

The term "quality reporting period" means, with respect to a year, a period specified by the Secretary.

(9) Information reporting on services included in global surgical packages

With respect to services for which a physician is required to report information in accordance with subsection (c)(8)(B)(i), the Secretary may through rulemaking delay payment of 5 percent of the amount that would otherwise be payable under the physician fee schedule under this section for such services until the information so required is reported.

(b) Establishment of fee schedules

(1) In general

Before November 1 of the preceding year, for each year beginning with 1998, subject to subsection (p), the Secretary shall establish, by regulation, fee schedules that establish payment amounts for all physicians' services furnished in all fee schedule areas (as defined in subsection (j)(2)) for the year. Except as provided in paragraph (2), each such payment amount for a service shall be equal to the product of—

(A) the relative value for the service (as determined in subsection (c)(2)),

(B) the conversion factor (established under subsection (d)) for the year, and

(C) the geographic adjustment factor (established under subsection (e)(2)) for the service for the fee schedule area.

(2) Treatment of radiology services and anesthesia services

(A) Radiology services

With respect to radiology services (including radiologist services, as defined in section 1395m(b)(6) of this title), the Secretary shall base the relative values on the relative value scale developed under section 1395m(b)(1)(A) of this title, with appropriate modifications of the relative values to assure that the relative values established for radiology services which are similar or related to other physicians' services are consistent with the relative values established for those similar or related services.

(B) Anesthesia services

In establishing the fee schedule for anesthesia services for which a relative value guide has been established under section 4048(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987, the Secretary shall use, to the extent practicable, such relative value guide, with appropriate adjustment of the conversion factor, in a manner to assure that the fee schedule amounts for anesthesia services are consistent with the fee schedule amounts for other services determined by the Secretary to be of comparable value. In applying the previous sentence, the Secretary shall adjust the conversion factor by geographic adjustment factors in the same manner as such adjustment is made under paragraph (1)(C).

(C) Consultation

The Secretary shall consult with the Physician Payment Review Commission and organizations representing physicians or suppliers who furnish radiology services and anesthesia services in applying subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(3) Treatment of interpretation of electrocardiograms

The Secretary—

(A) shall make separate payment under this section for the interpretation of electrocardiograms performed or ordered to be performed as part of or in conjunction with a visit to or a consultation with a physician, and

(B) shall adjust the relative values established for visits and consultations under subsection (c) so as not to include relative value units for interpretations of electrocardiograms in the relative value for visits and consultations.

(4) Special rule for imaging services

(A) In general

In the case of imaging services described in subparagraph (B) furnished on or after January 1, 2007, if—

(i) the technical component (including the technical component portion of a global fee) of the service established for a year under the fee schedule described in paragraph (1) without application of the

geographic adjustment factor described in paragraph (1)(C), exceeds

(ii) the Medicare OPD fee schedule amount established under the prospective payment system for hospital outpatient department services under paragraph (3)(D) of section 1395*l*(t) of this title for such service for such year, determined without regard to geographic adjustment under paragraph (2)(D) of such section,

the Secretary shall substitute the amount described in clause (ii), adjusted by the geographic adjustment factor described in paragraph (1)(C), for the fee schedule amount for such technical component for such year.

(B) Imaging services described

For purposes of subparagraph (A), imaging services described in this subparagraph are imaging and computer-assisted imaging services, including X-ray, ultrasound (including echocardiography), nuclear medicine (including positron emission tomography), magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography, and fluoroscopy, but excluding diagnostic and screening mammography, and for 2010, 2011, and the first 2 months of 2012, dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry services (as described in paragraph (6)).

(C) Adjustment in imaging utilization rate

With respect to fee schedules established for 2011, 2012, and 2013, in the methodology for determining practice expense relative value units for expensive diagnostic imaging equipment under the final rule published by the Secretary in the Federal Register on November 25, 2009 (42 CFR 410 et al.), the Secretary shall use a 75 percent assumption instead of the utilization rates otherwise established in such final rule. With respect to fee schedules established for 2014 and subsequent years, in such methodology, the Secretary shall use a 90 percent utilization rate.

(D) Adjustment in technical component discount on single-session imaging involving consecutive body parts

For services furnished on or after July 1, 2010, the Secretary shall increase the reduction in payments attributable to the multiple procedure payment reduction applicable to the technical component for imaging under the final rule published by the Secretary in the Federal Register on November 21, 2005 (part 405 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations) from 25 percent to 50 percent.

(5) Treatment of intensive cardiac rehabilitation program

(A) In general

In the case of an intensive cardiac rehabilitation program described in section 1395x(eee)(4) of this title, the Secretary shall substitute the Medicare OPD fee schedule amount established under the prospective payment system for hospital outpatient department service under paragraph (3)(D) of section 1395*l*(t) of this title for cardiac rehabilitation (under HCPCS codes 93797 and 93798 for calendar year 2007, or any succeeding HCPCS codes for cardiac rehabilitation).

(B) Definition of session

Each of the services described in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of section 1395x(eee)(3) of this title, when furnished for one hour, is a separate session of intensive cardiac rehabilitation.

(C) Multiple sessions per day

Payment may be made for up to 6 sessions per day of the series of 72 one-hour sessions of intensive cardiac rehabilitation services described in section 1395x(eee)(4)(B) of this title.

(6) Treatment of bone mass scans

For dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry services (identified in 2006 by HCPCS codes 76075 and 76077 (and

any succeeding codes)) furnished during 2010, 2011, and the first 2 months of 2012, instead of the payment amount that would otherwise be determined under this section for such years, the payment amount shall be equal to 70 percent of the product of—

(A) the relative value for the service (as determined in subsection (c)(2)) for 2006;

(B) the conversion factor (established under subsection (d)) for 2006; and

(C) the geographic adjustment factor (established under subsection (e)(2)) for the service for the fee schedule area for 2010, 2011, and the first 2 months of 2012, respectively.

(7) Adjustment in discount for certain multiple therapy services

In the case of therapy services furnished on or after January 1, 2011, and before April 1, 2013, and for which payment is made under fee schedules established under this section, instead of the 25 percent multiple procedure payment reduction specified in the final rule published by the Secretary in the Federal Register on November 29, 2010, the reduction percentage shall be 20 percent. In the case of such services furnished on or after April 1, 2013, and for which payment is made under such fee schedules, instead of the 25 percent multiple procedure payment reduction specified in such final rule, the reduction percentage shall be 50 percent.

(8) Encouraging care management for individuals with chronic care needs

(A) In general

In order to encourage the management of care for individuals with chronic care needs the Secretary shall, subject to subparagraph (B), make payment (as the Secretary determines to be appropriate) under this section for chronic care management services furnished on or after January 1, 2015, by a physician (as defined in section 1395x(r)(1) of this title), physician assistant or nurse practitioner (as defined in section 1395x(aa)(5)(A) of this title), clinical nurse specialist (as defined in section 1395x(aa)(5)(B) of this title), or certified nurse midwife (as defined in section 1395x(gg)(2) of this title).

(B) Policies relating to payment

In carrying out this paragraph, with respect to chronic care management services, the Secretary shall—

(i) make payment to only one applicable provider for such services furnished to an individual during a period;

(ii) not make payment under subparagraph (A) if such payment would be duplicative of payment that is otherwise made under this subchapter for such services; and

(iii) not require that an annual wellness visit (as defined insection 1395x(hhh) of this title) or an initial preventive physical examination (as defined in section 1395x(ww) of this title) be furnished as a condition of payment for such management services.

(9) Special rule to incentivize transition from traditional X-ray imaging to digital radiography

(A) Limitation on payment for film X-ray imaging services

In the case of an imaging service (including the imaging portion of a service) that is an X-ray taken using film and that is furnished during 2017 or a subsequent year, the payment amount for the technical component (including the technical component portion of a global service) of such service that would otherwise be determined under this section (without application of this paragraph and before application of any other adjustment under this section) for such year shall be reduced by 20 percent.

(B) Phased-in limitation on payment for computed radiography imaging services

In the case of an imaging service (including the imaging portion of a service) that is an X-ray taken using computed radiography technology—

(i) in the case of such a service furnished during 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, or 2022, the payment amount for

the technical component (including the technical component portion of a global service) of such service that would otherwise be determined under this section (without application of this paragraph and before application of any other adjustment under this section) for such year shall be reduced by 7 percent; and

(ii) in the case of such a service furnished during 2023 or a subsequent year, the payment amount for the technical component (including the technical component portion of a global service) of such service that would otherwise be determined under this section (without application of this paragraph and before application of any other adjustment under this section) for such year shall be reduced by 10 percent.

(C) Computed radiography technology defined

For purposes of this paragraph, the term "computed radiography technology" means cassette-based imaging which utilizes an imaging plate to create the image involved.

(D) Implementation

In order to implement this paragraph, the Secretary shall adopt appropriate mechanisms which may include use of modifiers.

(10) Reduction of discount in payment for professional component of multiple imaging services

In the case of the professional component of imaging services furnished on or after January 1, 2017, instead of the 25 percent reduction for multiple procedures specified in the final rule published by the Secretary in the Federal Register on November 28, 2011, as amended in the final rule published by the Secretary in the Federal Register on November 16, 2012, the reduction percentage shall be 5 percent.

(11) Special rule for certain radiation therapy services

The code definitions, the work relative value units under subsection (c)(2)(C)(i), and the direct inputs for the practice expense relative value units under subsection (c)(2)(C)(ii) for radiation treatment delivery and related imaging services (identified in 2016 by HCPCS G-codes G6001 through G6015) for the fee schedule established under this subsection for services furnished in 2017, 2018, and 2019 shall be the same as such definitions, units, and inputs for such services for the fee schedule established for services furnished in 2016.

(12) Payment for psychotherapy for crisis services furnished in an applicable site of service

(A) In general

The Secretary shall establish new HCPCS codes under the fee schedule established under this subsection for services described in subparagraph (B) that are furnished on or after January 1, 2024.

(B) Services described

The services described in this subparagraph are psychotherapy for crisis services that are a furnished in an applicable site of service.

(C) Amount of payment

For services described in subparagraph (B) that are furnished to an individual in a year (beginning with 2024), in lieu of the fee schedule amount that would otherwise be determined under this subsection for such year, the fee schedule amount for such services for such year shall be equal to 150 percent of the fee schedule amount for non-facility sites of service for such year determined for services identified, as of January 1, 2022, by HCPCS codes 90839 and 90840 (and any succeeding codes).

(D) Definitions

In this paragraph:

(i) Applicable site of service

The term "applicable site of service" means a site of service other than a site where the facility rate under the fee schedule under this subsection applies and other than an office setting.

(ii) Psychotherapy for crisis services

The code descriptions for services described in subparagraph (B) shall be the same as the code descriptions for services identified, as of January 1, 2022, by HCPCS codes 90839 and 90840 (and any succeeding codes), except that such new codes shall be limited to services furnished in an applicable site of service.