



COA Report

California Orthopaedic Association

Sept. 28, 2020

TOP NEWS

CMS is Proposing a 15% Medicare Fee Schedule Reduction for Orthopaedic Surgeons

Effective January 1, 2021

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has announced proposed changes to the Physician Fee Schedule effective January 1, 2021. For orthopaedic surgeons, the proposed changes will result in a:

- **9.6% reduction in reimbursement for Evaluation & Management services** — these reductions came about with the reorganization of E&M codes.
- **5.4% reduction in reimbursement for hip and knee arthroplasty** — reductions in work values have been recommended by the AMA-RUC, so CMS will need to receive overwhelming comments from physicians urging that their recommendations be rejected.

COA is opposed to both of these changes and needs your help to **contact CMS and urge them not to implement these reductions.**

If CMS adopts these reductions, we know that it's only a matter of time before the reductions are adopted by all payors.

These reductions are not only unjustified, they come at a very bad time as physician offices are just trying to recover from COVID-19. According to the Medical Group Management Association, 97% of practices have experienced a negative financial impact directly or indirectly related to COVID-19, with practices reporting a 55% decrease in revenue and a 60% decrease in patient volume since the beginning of the spread.

Beyond the challenges caused by the pandemic, it is important to note that Medicare payments have failed to keep up with inflation since the inception of the PFS in 1992. The planned decrease in the 2021 conversion factor will be below the 1994 conversion factor of \$32.9050 — which is worth approximately \$58.02 today. Other sectors of the health care delivery system do not face this same problem, as hospitals and others do not operate under a budgetary cap and receive market-based payment updates. It is also important to point out that other payers, including in the

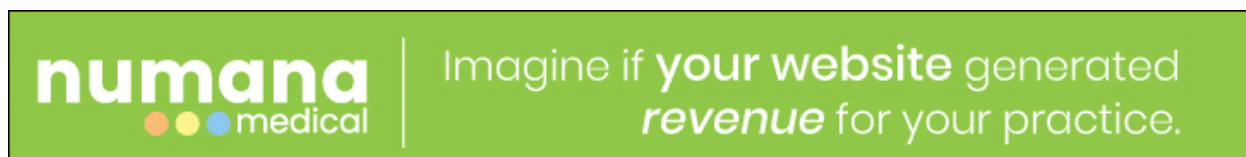
private sector, use the Medicare PFS when setting payment rates. Therefore, the cuts have far-reaching consequences well beyond the Medicare program.

To send a message to CMS, respond to the [AAOS Call to Action](#)

You can add your personal message or just send the AAOS email.

Comments are due by October 5.

Thanks for responding to this alert.



[Can You See Me Now? Optimizing Telehealth in Sports Medicine — New AOSSM 3-Part Webinar Series](#)

AOSSM

This compact, convenient program will provide a greater understanding of best practices for the sports medicine provider to utilize telehealth. A series of three webinars will include techniques on the virtual physical exam of the knee, shoulder, and hip. Medical-legal consideration from the physician and attorney perspective, and strategies for reimbursement will be discussed. Integration of clinical experience with optimal implementation of telehealth from experts in various practice settings to help you get the most out of the virtual encounters.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

[Trump Signs Executive Orders on Healthcare: 6 Things to Know](#)

Becker's Hospital Review

President Donald Trump on Sept. 24 signed two executive orders implementing his "America First Healthcare Plan." Here are six things to know.

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New Scripps Health Co-CEO Shares 'Hot Opportunities for Improving Value'

HealthLeaders

Scripps Health has split the health system's chief medical officer position into two roles. In August, Anil Keswani, MD, was appointed as chief medical officer for ambulatory and accountable care at the San Diego-based health system. He had previously led population health efforts at Scripps and earlier served as vice president of medical management at Chicago-based Advocate Health Care. Also in August, Ghazala Sharieff, MD, MBA, was appointed chief medical officer for acute care, clinical excellence, and experience.

Keswani recently talked with HealthLeaders about the outpatient setting and value-based care. The following is a lightly edited transcript of that conversation.

[READ MORE](#)

Webinar: 7 Ways to Improve Your Telehealth Notes

KarenZupko & Associates, Inc.

Join KZA consultant, Jen Bell for a special presentation on documentation compliance. Jen will outline 7 ways to improve your telehealth visit documentation during the current COVID-19 public health emergency.

The session will cover:

- Why it's important to be proactive in telehealth documentation right now
- What's the same and what's different from office visit documentation
- Practical documentation tips to support your telehealth billing to payors and auditors

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[Dennis Hall](#), Director of Publishing, 469-420-2656 | [Download media kit](#)
[Brie Ragland](#), Content Editor, 469-420-2604 | [Contribute news](#)

California Orthopaedic Association

1246 P Street | Sacramento, CA 95814 | 916-454-9884 | [Contact Us](#) | www.coa.org

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