



AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR GASTROINTESTINAL ENDOSCOPY

Patient access to care is threatened by policies that create barriers to care, including those that arbitrarily cut Medicare payments to providers to achieve savings targets. Payment policies must reflect the cost of providing care specific to site of service. Congress must take steps to preserve patient access to care now and in the future.

PATIENT ACCESS TO AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTERS

ISSUE OVERVIEW:

The Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) is an important part of the practice of gastroenterology, providing a safe, patient friendly and cost-effective environment for the provision of medical services. The majority of ASCs in which gastroenterologists practice are single specialty centers.

Any change in Hospital Outpatient Department (HOPD) payment policy when it is not mirrored for the ASC continues to contribute to the growing gap in payment rates between the two sites of service. Today, ASCs are reimbursed by Medicare an average of 53 percent of the hospital outpatient rate, compared to 86 percent in 2003.

HOPD and ASC payments should be updated annually using the same inflationary index (the hospital market basket index), which would serve to stem the widening gap in payments between the two sites of service. Currently, ASC payment updates are based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), which measures inflation of goods and services that are atypical to what ASCs purchase, and, therefore, is not a good inflation factor for ASCs. Comparatively, the hospital market basket index measures the cost of practicing medicine.

Using the same inflation factor for HOPDs and ASCs would not create equal payments between the two sites of service. Rather, updating ASCs using the hospital market basket improves ASC payment predictability and allows ASCs to compete on a level playing field with HOPDs for nursing and other health care professionals.

LEGISLATIVE ASK:

Support legislation that instructs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to replace the CPI-U with the hospital market basket as the index for annually updating ASC payments.

HOUSE: Cosponsor the “Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality and Access Act of 2017” (H.R. 1838) introduced by Reps. Devin Nunes (R-CA) and John Larson (D-CT).

SENATE: Cosponsor the “Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality and Access Act of 2017” (S. 1001) introduced by Sens. Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).