

## Reimbursement for '09 higher than proposed

Pamela Johnson

The 2009 Medicare physician fee schedule implemented provisions of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, or MIPPA, which had a positive effect on payment for pathology services included in the fee schedule. The bill, which became law on July 15, 2008, replaced a scheduled cut in physician payment for the last half of 2008 and 2009 with a 1.1 percent increase for this period. It also required that a previous decision to take budget-neutrality adjustments from the work relative value units be changed, as supported by the CAP and other medical specialty groups.

While MIPPA provided a 1.1 percent update to the conversion factor, at the same time the five-year review budget-neutrality adjustment of -6.41 percent was applied to the

conversion factor rather than to the work RVUs as in the previous two years. The College had asked that the five-year review budget-neutrality adjustment be applied to the conversion factor rather than the work RVUs because it spreads the negative adjustment over the entire payment for a code and not just the work relative value unit.

Applying the five-year budget-neutrality adjustment to the conversion factor rather than work RVUs has a positive effect for hospital-based pathologists for two reasons: 1) The bulk of payment for hospital-based pathologists is derived from the work RVU, which previously carried all of the weight for the budget-neutrality adjustment decrease; and 2) the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services had used this decreased work RVU to allocate practice expense costs to professional component

services. This negative adjustment has now been removed for 2009.

As a result of this change, reimbursement for hospital-based pathologists will see an increase above what the CMS published in its 2009 proposed physician fee schedule. For example, the change is responsible for a five percent shift to CPT code 88305-PC. In the proposed rule the CMS published last summer, the agency projected a two percent reduction; payment for this service will now see a three percent increase.

Additional changes in the final rule include the establishment of new G codes for use with specific prostate saturation biopsy sampling specimens. The new G codes and the CMS-established relative value units are in the chart below and on page 60. These new codes are to be used only for specimens procured by the physician using new CPT

code 55706 (Biopsies, prostate, needle, transperineal, stereotactic template guided saturation sampling, including imaging guidance). CPT code 55700 (Biopsy, prostate; needle or punch, single or multiple, any approach) is used for prostate biopsies obtained by clinicians using a traditional needle or punch. Prostate biopsies obtained by this mechanism will continue to be coded using existing CPT code 88305. To clarify this issue, the final rule says that under the physician fee schedule "CPT code 88305 will continue to be recognized for those surgical pathology services unrelated to prostate needle saturation biopsy sampling." Therefore, it is now necessary for the pathologist to ascertain the code the clinician used to procure the biopsies before assigning a pathology CPT code for the work performed. □

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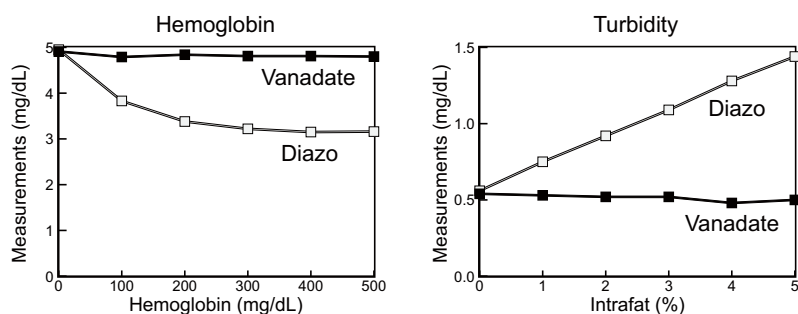
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## 2009 national physician fee schedule relative value units

Conversion factor for 2009 = \$36.0666,  
released Nov. 1, 2008

CPT/ HCPCS	Modifier	Description	Work RVU	Transitioned		Transitioned		
				Non- facility PE RVU	Facility PE RVU	Mal- practice RVU	Non- facility total	Facility total
G0141		Scr c/v cyto, autosys and md	0.42	0.31	0.31	0.02	0.75	0.75
G0364		Bone marrow aspirate & biopsy	0.16	0.16	0.07	0.04	0.36	0.27
G0416		Sat biopsy prostate 1-20 spc	3.09	13.96	13.96	0.54	17.59	17.59
G0416	TC	Sat biopsy prostate 1-20 spc	0.00	12.14	12.14	0.30	12.44	12.44
G0416	26	Sat biopsy prostate 1-20 spc	3.09	1.82	1.82	0.24	5.15	5.15
G0417		Sat biopsy prostate 21-40	5.86	27.26	27.26	1.06	34.18	34.18
G0417	TC	Sat biopsy prostate 21-40	0.00	23.71	23.71	0.60	24.31	24.31
G0417	26	Sat biopsy prostate 21-40	5.86	3.55	3.55	0.46	9.87	9.87
G0418		Sat biopsy prostate 41-60	10.30	46.56	46.56	1.80	58.66	58.66
G0418	TC	Sat biopsy prostate 41-60	0.00	40.50	40.50	1.03	41.53	41.53
G0418	26	Sat biopsy prostate 41-60	10.30	6.06	6.06	0.77	17.13	17.13
G0419		Sat biopsy prostate: >60	11.61	55.86	55.86	2.16	69.63	69.63
G0419	TC	Sat biopsy prostate: >60	0.00	48.60	48.60	1.23	49.83	49.83
G0419	26	Sat biopsy prostate: >60	11.61	7.26	7.26	0.93	19.80	19.80
P3001		Screening pap smear by phys	0.42	0.31	0.31	0.02	0.75	0.75
10021		Fna w/o image	1.27	2.15	0.43	0.10	3.52	1.80
10022		Fna w/image	1.27	2.26	0.43	0.08	3.61	1.78
36430		Blood transfusion service	0.00	0.94	0.94	0.06	1.00	1.00
36440		Bl push transfuse, 2 yr or <	1.03	0.28	0.28	0.10	1.41	1.41
36450		Bl exchange/transfuse, nb	2.23	0.80	0.80	0.21	3.24	3.24
36455		Bl exchange/transfuse non-nb	2.43	0.93	0.93	0.15	3.51	3.51
36460		Transfusion service, fetal	6.58	1.92	1.92	0.79	9.29	9.29
36511		Apheresis wbc	1.74	0.62	0.62	0.08	2.44	2.44
36512		Apheresis rbc	1.74	0.66	0.66	0.08	2.48	2.48
36513		Apheresis platelets	1.74	0.68	0.68	0.17	2.59	2.59
36514		Apheresis plasma	1.74	11.91	0.60	0.08	13.73	2.42
36515		Apheresis, adsorp/reinfuse	1.74	49.35	0.55	0.08	51.17	2.37
36516		Apheresis, selective	1.22	56.63	0.41	0.08	57.93	1.71
38205		Harvest allogenic stem cells	1.50	0.60	0.60	0.07	2.17	2.17
38206		Harvest auto stem cells	1.50	0.60	0.60	0.07	2.17	2.17
38207		Cryopreserve stem cells	0.89	0.44	0.44	0.01	1.34	1.34
38208		Thaw preserved stem cells	0.56	0.28	0.28	0.02	0.86	0.86
38209		Wash harvest stem cells	0.24	0.12	0.12	0.01	0.37	0.37
38210		T-cell depletion of harvest	1.57	0.78	0.78	0.03	2.38	2.38
38211		Tumor cell deplete of harvest	1.42	0.71	0.71	0.02	2.15	2.15
38212		Rbc depletion of harvest	0.94	0.47	0.47	0.02	1.43	1.43
38213		Platelet deplete of harvest	0.24	0.12	0.12	0.01	0.37	0.37
38214		Volume deplete of harvest	0.81	0.40	0.40	0.01	1.22	1.22
38215		Harvest stem cell concentrate	0.94	0.47	0.47	0.02	1.43	1.43
38220		Bone marrow aspiration	1.08	2.95	0.50	0.05	4.08	1.63
38221		Bone marrow biopsy	1.37	3.09	0.63	0.07	4.53	2.07
38230		Bone marrow collection	4.80	3.15	3.15	0.48	8.43	8.43
80500		Lab pathology consultation	0.37	0.19	0.12	0.01	0.57	0.50
80502		Lab pathology consultation	1.33	0.41	0.37	0.04	1.78	1.74
83020	26	Hemoglobin electrophoresis	0.37	0.13	0.13	0.01	0.51	0.51
83912	26	Genetic examination	0.37	0.11	0.11	0.01	0.49	0.49
84165	26	Protein e-phoresis, serum	0.37	0.12	0.12	0.01	0.50	0.50
84166	26	Protein e-phoresis/urine/csf	0.37	0.12	0.12	0.01	0.50	0.50
84181	26	Western blot test	0.37	0.12	0.12	0.01	0.50	0.50

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