

## Potential Physician Payment for 2008

It looks like physicians will see a negative 10.1 percent update in Medicare fee-for-service payment rates unless Congress takes action.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has no choice but to implement this negative update because it is mandated by a statutory formula.

Under the new rule, released Novem-

ber 1, the agency estimates that it will pay approximately \$58.9 billion to about 900,000 physicians and other health care professionals. The rule, which becomes effective January 1, 2008, also includes quality incentive rates and related policy changes.

Impact to Internal Medicine under the 2008 physician fee schedule rule would be -10%. ■

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## New Codes for Smoking Cessation

| RVUs | 2008 Code | Code Descriptor   |
|------|-----------|---|
| 0.33 | 99406     | Smoking and tobacco use cessation counseling visit; intermediate, greater than 3 minutes up to 10 minutes |
| 0.66 | 99407     | Intensive, greater than 10 minutes  |

- Medicare— “Dx codes should reflect the condition the patient has that is adversely affected by the use of tobacco or the condition the patient is being treated for with a therapeutic agent whose metabolism or dosing is affected by the use of tobacco.”
- Document “counseled tobacco use cessation, 3 minutes”
- Alcohol and/or substance abuse codes require a structured screening not commonly performed in the ED. ■

## Critical Care

**Newly clarified AMA Comment:** If one physician performs critical care services with another physician of the same group practice who is of the same specialty and provides subsequent criti-

cal care services to the same patient on the same date, only one of the physicians of that group practice may report the critical care code(s) (99291-99292)

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