

ACOS NEWS

American College of Osteopathic Surgeons®

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Legislative Update:

Medicare physician payments increase by 1.5 percent for 2005; effect on specialties varies



As required by the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) passed by Congress in December 2003, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

Services (CMS) has issued its rule for the physician fee schedule for calendar year 2005 with an overall 1.5 percent increase in Medicare physician fees for 2005. However, this increase will not be felt equally by all specialties.

Some specialties will see more than the 1.5 percent increase, and others will see less, depending on the impact of the CMS's other changes to the rule. The CMS also has revised its methodology for calculating the practice expense and malpractice expense components of valuing physician services. (See the chart on page 3 for the projected impact of the rule on 2005 Medicare fees by specialty.)

The biggest winners for the 2005 Medicare fee schedule appear to be oral/maxillofacial surgery, with a 5 percent overall increase; and vascular surgery, pathology, and interventional

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Don't miss 2005 In-depth Review

General surgeons, plan to attend the 2005 ACOS General Surgery In-depth Review Seminar on Jan. 13–15 at the PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Enjoy the best of golf, tennis, and swimming in this picture-perfect setting and attend exceptional educational sessions on breast, hernia, and biliary tract surgery.

The program will begin on Thursday, Jan. 13, with sessions on surgical breast procedures. The breast ultrasound workshop originally scheduled for Thursday has been cancelled.

An update on hernia and biliary tract surgery and the complications of these procedures will be the focus of Friday's all-day program.

Saturday's program will review sentinel lymph node biopsy techniques. On Saturday morning, also learn how to remove common bile duct stones laparoscopically in an optional workshop—"Common Bile Duct Exploration." Using validated models and today's newest

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Legislative Update:

2005 Medicare physician fee schedule

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radiology, each with a 4 percent increase. The biggest losers are audiologists, with a 2 percent reduction; and allergy/immunology and ophthalmology, with no increases.

The CMS rule also would implement the MMA provision requiring a new 5 percent incentive payment for physicians furnishing services in “physician scarcity areas.” This new incentive will apply in tandem with the existing 10 percent incentive for services rendered in health professional shortage areas (HPSAs). Congress created this new 5 percent incentive to make it easier to recruit and retain physicians in certain areas of the country. There will be physician scarcity areas for primary care and for specialty care. Physician scarcity areas for primary care will be determined by the ratio of primary care physicians in active practice (excluding pediatricians) to Medicare

beneficiaries residing in that county or area. Physician scarcity areas for specialty care will be determined by the ratio of nonprimary care physicians in active practice to Medicare beneficiaries residing in that county or area. A list of these physician scarcity areas will be published in the *Federal Register* prior to Jan. 1, 2005.

The CMS rule calls for steep cuts in reimbursement for physician-administered injectable drugs, including cancer treatments, by tying reimbursement to the “average sales price” rather than the “average wholesale price,” which is usually higher. The agency hopes to offset the lower reimbursement with increased payment rates for drug administration services, but the net effect of these changes on physicians is still unknown.

As required by the MMA, beginning in 2005, Medicare will cover an initial preventive physical examination. Previously, Medicare had not covered routine physical examinations or checkups. Beginning on Jan. 1, 2005, Medicare will cover one initial preventive physical examination within the first six months after the effective date of a beneficiary’s first Part B coverage period but only if that coverage period begins after Jan. 1, 2005. Therefore, this new benefit is only available for new Medicare beneficiaries.

The CMS also added coverage for diabetes screening tests and cardiovascular screening blood tests. These services join an ever-increasing list of screening and other preventive services that are now covered under Medicare Part B, including pneumococcal, influenza, and hepatitis B vaccines and their administration; screening mammography; screening pap smear; screening pelvic exams; prostate cancer screening tests; diabetes outpatient self-management training services; bone mass measurements; glaucoma screening; and medical nutrition therapy services.

ACOS supports lawsuit alleging discrimination against D.O.

The ACOS joined the American Osteopathic Association and the Michigan Osteopathic Association in filing an amicus curiae brief on Sept. 20, 2004, on behalf of Lowell R. Fisher, D.O., in his action against WA Foote Memorial Hospital, Inc., before the Supreme Court in Michigan. Dr. Fisher’s lawsuit alleges that Foote Hospital illegally discriminated against him as an osteopathic physician.

will impact specialties differently; malpractice reform fails

Rule's projected impact on 2005 Medicare fees by specialty

Specialty	Percentage of change in fee schedule payment for 2005 (including practice expense, malpractice, and update changes)
Allergy/Immunology	0
Anesthesiology	2
Audiology	-2
Cardiac Surgery	1
Cardiology	2
Colon and Rectal Surgery	2
Critical Care	2
Emergency Medicine	2
Family Practice	1
General Surgery	2
Internal Medicine	1
Interventional Radiology	4
Neurological Surgery	1
Ophthalmology	0
Oral/Maxillofacial Surgery	5
Orthopedic Surgery	1
Pathology	4
Pediatrics	1
Plastic Surgery	2
Pulmonary Disease	2
Thoracic Surgery	2
Vascular Surgery	4

Medical liability reform fails again

As Congress adjourned for the election season, it had failed once again to pass medical liability reform. The legislation stalled, as it has for years, in the Senate. This past year, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) tried to pass specialty-specific medical liability reform. Senator Frist brought to the Senate floor for votes legislation targeted only at OB/GYNs or emergency medicine physicians. However, even these narrow bills failed to garner the 60 votes necessary in the Senate to cut off debate.

Senator Frist's objective in bringing up these bills for a vote was not really to pass them, as their fate was known in advance, but rather to call attention to the issue prior to the election. Passage of any meaningful medical liability reform legislation would require a different composition of senators, which can only be achieved through the election. ■

Author Laura E. Loeb, J.D., is a partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm of Hogan & Hartson. She is retained by the ACOS as a government affairs consultant.

Member News

Four ACOS members have been inducted into the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Mentor Hall of Fame: **Peter B. Ajluni, D.O., FACOS, FAOAO**, of Bloomfield Hills, Mich.; **William G. Anderson, D.O., FACOS**, of Southfield, Mich.; **John H. Finley Jr., D.O., FACOS**, of Southfield; and **John R. Socey, D.O., FACOS**, of Flint, Mich.

Dr. Ajluni is also the recipient of the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine 2004 Walter E. Patenge Medal of Public Service. Dr. Anderson was honored recently by the American Osteopathic Foundation (AOF) and the National Osteopathic Medical Association for his contributions to osteopathic medicine and his

fund-raising efforts for the AOF William Anderson Scholarship Fund.

Jerry G. Gaston, D.O., FACOS, of Wichita, Kan., received the Outstanding Volunteer Teaching Faculty Award from the Via Christi family practice residency program of the Via Christi Health System in Wichita for his training of residents in endoscopy.

Anthony A. Minissale, D.O., FACOS, of York, Pa., was honored in April at the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association's (POMA) annual convention in Philadelphia with the association's Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his

contributions to POMA and the osteopathic profession. Dr. Minissale has served on POMA's board of trustees for more than 10 years, as house delegate for more than 20 years, as POMA secretary-treasurer, and chair of numerous POMA committees. Immediate past president of the AOA, he is director of medical education and vice president of medical affairs at Memorial Hospital in York.

Dane K. Johnson, D.O., in private practice in Mt. Ayr, Iowa, was installed as president-elect of the Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association during the association's annual conference in Des Moines. ■

Hands-on courses offered at January In-depth Review

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equipment, including cystic duct dilators, baskets, and flexible choledochoscopes, you will be familiarized with a sequential and systematic approach to retrieving common bile duct stones. Register early for this important workshop, which will be limited to 15 participants.

The full educational program and registration materials for the 2005 ACOS In-depth Review Seminar will be available in November.

To make hotel reservations at the PGA National Resort & Spa, call (561) 627-2000 and identify yourself as an ACOS In-depth Review attendee. A block of rooms has been reserved at the special room rate of \$190 for single or double occupancy until Dec. 22, 2004, or until the room block is filled, whichever is sooner. ■



New Resident Members

The ACOS welcomes the following surgeons in training who have joined the College as resident members since August 2003:

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New Fellows

The designation of Fellow (FACOS) was conferred on the following members at the 2004 Ceremonial Conclave:

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The ACOS Residents Section held its annual business meeting during the 2004 Annual Clinical Assembly (ACA) and took the following actions:

Residents Section Governing Council elections

The ACOS congratulates the following residents who were elected to serve on the 2004–2005 Residents Section Governing Council:

- *Chair*—Nikhil L. Shah, D.O., Vattikuti Urology Institute, Detroit, Mich.
- *Chair-elect*—Casey J. Thomas, D.O., Mount Clemens General Hospital, Mount Clemens, Mich.
- *Secretary-Treasurer*—John R. Spitalieri, D.O., Western University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific/Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, Colton, Calif.
- *Members-at-large*—W. Wayne Wolf III, D.O., University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine/Medical Center of Independence, Independence, Mo.; and Stephen E. Small, D.O., University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey School of Osteopathic Medicine/Kennedy Memorial Hospital/Our Lady of Lourdes, Stratford, N.J.

ACOS model training program curriculum project

The ACOS model training program curriculum project was discussed. Project consultants India Broyles, Ed.D., and Cynthia Cartwright, R.N., M.S.Ed., are seeking reviewers for the draft curriculum documents for each surgical specialty. If you are interested in serving as a reviewer, send an e-mail to tlofty@theacos.org by Nov. 30, 2004, and include your specialty.

ACOS electronic log system

The section also discussed issues regarding the new ACOS electronic log system, which the specialties of general, general vascular, urological, plastic and reconstructive, and neurological surgery were required to use as of July 1, 2004. ACOS staff will submit recommendations to the Residency Evaluation and Standards Committee (RESC) for improving the electronic log system (e.g., customization for each specialty). Residents should e-mail their recommendations to tlofty@theacos.org by Nov. 30, 2004.

Reimbursement policy for council members

A reimbursement policy was approved for Residents Section Governing Council members who attend the section's annual business meeting and other activities during the ACA. Council members may be reimbursed for their travel expenses and a two-day stay at the ACA headquarters hotel. The section chair may be reimbursed for an additional two-and-a-half days, up to the amount budgeted for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses approved by the ACOS Board. The maximum reimbursement for plane/train fare may not exceed coach-class round trip; reimbursement for auto mileage may not exceed coach-class round trip airfare and is reimbursed at the established IRS rate. Rental car expenses are not reimbursable.

If you have any suggestions for Residents Section activities or would like to become more involved in the section's activities, please e-mail Dr. Shah at shah@umich.edu.

Volunteer to be a site visitor

Are you interested in serving as a site visitor for AOA-approved osteopathic surgical residency training programs? If so, submit a letter of interest and your current curriculum vitae to the RESC by Dec. 3, 2004. Site visitors must be approved by the RESC and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

To be eligible for consideration as a site visitor, you should:

- be AOA or ABMS board certified;
- be a member of the ACOS and the AOA;
- have at least two years of surgical practice experience; and
- have experience in the training of surgical residents in AOA-approved or ACGME-accredited surgical residency programs.

AOA-approved site visitors are required to attend the ACOS site review educational program offered during the ACA prior to conducting their first site review, and they must complete the educational program at least once every three years to maintain their eligibility. Site visitors who do not maintain their eligibility must submit an updated CV and letter of interest to the RESC for re-approval.

To reduce the cost of site visits, a site visitor may be asked to conduct two or three site visits in the same geographic area to avoid additional airfare. However, cost considerations are secondary to those of specialty expertise and conflict of interest.

Several requirements are in place to avoid conflicts of interest in site visitor assignments:

- A site visitor may not practice in the same geographic area as the program being inspected.
- A site visitor should not agree to visit a program in which he or she has a personal conflict of interest—(i.e., if the program director is a relative; if the site visitor's employment/staff privileges were ever terminated by the institution being inspected; if the site visitor is a candidate for employment/staff privileges at the institution; or if any other personal or professional relationships (positive or negative) exist that might influence or appear to influence the site visitor's judgment regarding the program. It is also preferable that a site visitor not visit programs at institutions where he or she trained or practiced. All questions about possible conflicts of interest in site visit assignments should be directed to the ACOS for clarification.

The site visitor's primary responsibilities are to confirm the training program's adherence to the AOA/ACOS training standards and to collect supporting data for the RESC to review and evaluate. To view the new site visit workbook and the *AOA/ACOS Basic Standards for Approval of Residency Training in Surgery and the Surgical Specialties*, visit the AOA website at www.do-online.org.

If you have questions regarding site visitor requirements and responsibilities, contact Tracy Lofty, ACOS Director of Postdoctoral Training Standards and Evaluation, at (800) 888-1312, ext. 300, or by e-mail at tlofty@theacos.org. ■

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Call for 2005-2006 committee members

ACOS members who are interested in serving on College committees in 2005-2006 should contact President-elect James E. Hoogeboom, D.O., FACOS, by March 1, 2005.

Volunteers should send a CV and a letter or an e-mail indicating their areas of interest and qualifications to Dr. Hoogeboom, in care of the ACOS, 123 North Henry St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2903; fax (703) 684-3280; info@theacos.org.

In Memoriam



Jack P. Leach, D.O., FACOS—Sept. 6, 2003

Dr. Leach, of Houston, Texas, was a 1950 graduate of the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kirksville, Mo. He completed an internship and a residency in general surgery at Detroit Osteopathic Hospital in Detroit, Mich., and was board certified in general surgery in 1981.

Dr. Leach practiced general surgery in the Houston area for 40 years until retiring in 1994. He was affiliated with the Houston Osteopathic Hospital and with Doctors Hospital, where he served as chair of the department of surgery and as chief of staff.

He had been a member of the ACOS since 1958 and was a Fellow of the College.



Henry A. D'Alonzo, D.O., FACOS—June 19, 2004

Dr. D'Alonzo, of Narberth, Pa., was a 1951 graduate of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) in Philadelphia, Pa. He completed an internship and a general surgery residency at the Hospital of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and was board certified in general surgery in 1972.

Dr. D'Alonzo was in surgical practice in the Philadelphia area for 40 years. He also served as a clinical associate professor of surgery at PCOM and had staff appointments at the Hospital of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Metropolitan Hospital in Philadelphia and Springfield, Pa., and Suburban General Hospital in Norristown, Pa.

He had been a member of the ACOS since 1966 and was a Fellow of the College. He was a life member of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association.



Earl Richard Schmidt, D.O.—Sept. 18, 2004

Dr. Schmidt, of Cameron, Mo., received his osteopathic training at the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kansas City, Mo., graduating in 1963. He successfully completed an internship at the Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital in Pontiac, Mich., and a residency at the Grand Rapids Osteopathic Hospital in Grand Rapids, Mich.

He was a general surgeon and was affiliated with the Cameron Community Hospital.

Dr. Schmidt had been a member of the ACOS since 1979. ■

New Members

The following new members were inducted into the College during the 2004 Annual Ceremonial Conclave on Oct. 1 in San Diego:

Brett D. Akers, D.O.	Philip M. Hutchison, D.O.
Andrew L. Archer, D.O.	Ravinder S. Jarial, D.O.
Christopher T. Bailey, D.O.	Claine D. Judy, D.O.
Dawn M. Bodell, D.O.	Johnna Kay Knust, D.O.
Caren L. Borjeson, D.O.	Daniel T. Laich, D.O.
Ward P. Buster, D.O.	Mindy K. Lane, D.O.
Mario Carrillo, D.O.	Jung J. Lim, D.O.
David Lee Coffman, D.O.	Carolyn C. Majors, D.O.
Carolyn J. Conboy, D.O.	Michael J. Mallis, D.O.
Rex D. Cooley Jr., D.O.	Marc Lee Miller, D.O.
Fred James Crapse Jr., D.O.	Christopher J. Pham, D.O.
Donnelle L. Crouse, D.O.	Ivan Darrell Pugh Jr., D.O.
Scot Aaron Currie, D.O.	Marian K. Querry, D.O.
David Daniel Davila, D.O.	Todd Ryan, D.O.
Darius A. Divina, D.O.	Christopher E. Selgrath, D.O.
Victor V. Dizon, D.O.	Michael M. Seto, D.O.
Kiet A. Doan, D.O.	Paul Sresthadatta, D.O.
Christopher Lee Downing, D.O.	Christopher G. Stanczyk, D.O.
Patrick L. Elliott, D.O.	Brian N. Stirling, D.O.
Jarad Scott Fingerman, D.O.	Victor H. Taranto, D.O.
Richard O. Follwell, D.O.	Albert J. Tuono, D.O.
Jason A. Fried, D.O.	Innocent N. Ubunama, D.O.
Gregory S. Gaborek, D.O.	Fausto Y. Vinces, D.O.
Robert Michael Galler, D.O.	Dennis A. Whitmer, D.O.
Darlene M. Gaynor-Krupnick, D.O.	Scott E. Williams, D.O.
Rick Gemma, D.O.	Jeffrey M. Wisser, D.O.
Roxane Gibson, D.O.	Farid Zehtab, D.O.
Mark A. Hrko, D.O.	



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Jan. 13–15, 2005

*ACOS General Surgery
In-depth Review Seminar*
PGA National Resort
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Oct. 22–25, 2005

*2005 Annual Clinical Assembly
of Osteopathic Specialists*
Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, Fla.

Call (800) 888-1312 or visit the ACOS website at www.facos.org for more information about ACOS programs.

Classifieds

OHIO VASCULAR SURGERY FELLOWSHIPS

One-year extensive general peripheral vascular surgery fellowships available at OUCOM/Grandview Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. Programs include all modalities presently employed for the correction of underlying vascular pathologies. Contact Laszlo Posevitz, D.O., or Medical Education at (800) 497-1559 for further information.

CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY RESIDENCY

Plaza Medical Center, Fort Worth, Texas, is now accepting applications for July 2005. Applicants must be board certified/board eligible in general surgery. Plaza Medical Center is affiliated with the University of North Texas Health Science Center and the Texas OPTI. Direct inquiries to Medical Education, (817) 347-5887, or tassi.reeves@lonestarhealth.com.

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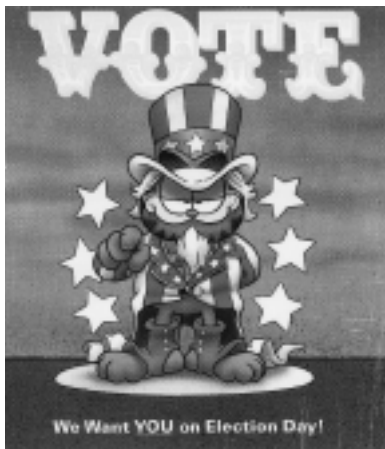
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