Editors’ Message

Keeping an Eye on the Bottom Line

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Retina specialists know by this point that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have cut reimbursement for a number of codes in 2015. Of particular interest to our subspecialty are reductions in payments for vitrectomy, with reductions as high as 27.5%.

There are other codes that will see reimbursement cuts (injections and fundus photographs, for example) and Medicare’s Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula remains an unresolved issue that could cut all reimbursement by 22%. It is hoped that this is the year that Congress will enact a new methodology for controlling per beneficiary costs. At the least, Congress may vote on another delay in the SGR taking hold, as it has done for nearly a decade.

The new era of health care is one of cost-containment. The cuts by CMS and the ongoing questions about the SGR are emblematic of what may become the norm for medicine. Already, Congressional advisory panels are advising adjustments in Medicare payment models that may leave little room to cover rising operational costs. It is almost certain that we have not seen the last efforts to rein in health care spending and that future activity will continue to impact our revenue.

These are important issues we should all monitor closely, as they will affect our ability to maintain economic viability and care for patients on a day-to-day basis.

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