



# North Carolina Chapter of the American College of Cardiology

## **ACT NOW: Proposed Cuts Threaten Patient Care**

### **Quick Links**

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[ACC CardioAdvocacy  
Network](#)

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The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released its proposed 2010 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, which includes policy proposals that would significantly reduce payments for cardiovascular-related services. CMS projects that the proposed changes would reduce total Medicare payments to cardiology by 11 percent. The projected payment cut would result from changes to the following areas: practice expense calculation; equipment utilization rates; malpractice rate calculation; and payment for consultations. In addition, CMS proposes a 21.5 percent reduction in the Medicare conversion factor due to the flawed sustainable growth rate.

In short, there could be as high as a 30 percent cut in Medicare payments for cardiology. Taken together with the payment cuts cardiology has already experienced, CMS' proposed rule represents a grave threat to cardiology practices and the patients they serve.

### **ACT NOW! What you Can Do**

The ACC and our partners are prepared to wage an aggressive campaign to prevent implementation of these damaging policies. NCCACC is urging its members to contact their lawmakers and ask them to prevent these payment policies that will result in devastating cuts. You can reach your members using the

ACC's toll-free grassroots hotline (800-210-7193) or by emailing your members of Congress by going to the CardioAdvocacy Network (CAN) website at [ACC CAN](#).

### **Write to CMS**

The proposed rule is subject to revision following a period of public comment through August 31. Send a message to CMS with your thoughts on how these cuts will affect your practice and patients. CMS reads and reviews all comments; the more cardiology professionals that write in, the better. Comments can be sent to CMS by [clicking here](#).

### ***CMS Cuts Talking Points***

### **Submit a Video on the Cuts**

Take part in a video campaign that can be shared with members of Congress, regulatory officials and the public. Upload a 30-40 second video about the impacts of large-scale cuts on your ability to provide patients with the right care at the right time. Email Molly Nichelson at [mnichels@acc.org](mailto:mnichels@acc.org) to have it posted for you on ACC Advocacy's YouTube account. Don't own a video camera? Submit your story via the ACC's online forum, [The Lewin Report](#).

### **Involve Your Patients**

The ACC has patient materials and a letter that your patients can send to Capitol Hill on our CardioAdvocacy website - [ACC CAN](#). Feel free to pass this link along to your colleagues and print it out for your offices.

*Patient Materials on Payment Reform*

[Help Protect Your Cardiovascular Care](#)

[Congress Holds Your Heart in its Hands](#)

[Your Access to Cardiovascular Care is at Risk](#)

[Sample Letter to Congress from Patient](#)



## **STAYING UP-TO-DATE ON HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM**

There are a lot of moving parts regarding health system reform and the proposed rule. Information changes almost hourly and it's important that you are kept up-to-date on what's happening on Capitol Hill. Here are some useful tools to stay in touch:

### *Lewin Report*

Jack Lewin, M.D., the ACC's CEO maintains a blog which provides updates on health system reform. The blog can be found at: [The Lewin Report.](#)

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