



Tarpley & Underwood, P.C.
Certified Public Accountants

Healthcare Reform

What is going on? How can I protect my practice?

What can you do to help your practice through these challenging times?

1. First, you must continually improve your quality standards within your practice. This is necessary not just because of anticipated changes, but also because it is just good business.
2. You must become familiar with all the current quality initiative payments currently in place, and you must participate to whatever extent you can. While it is understood that most of them are inefficient and perhaps more trouble than they are worth, it is important that you understand the software and the measurements. These types of quality measurements will most likely be extended for all patients.
3. Become familiar with the Medical Home concept and consider becoming enrolled in the NCQA certification program if such concept is adopted in Georgia.
4. Become familiar with the Recovery Audit Contractor Program to determine that your medical records are up to date and properly document the procedures in place. It is likely that this area may be one in which there is a significant attempt to recoup monies to help defray the costs.
5. Analyze in your practice what is the breakeven point for you to operate given your current patient mix. This will be important as you analyze any new rates that are handed down in January 2010. We suggest you make this the "worst case" analysis on the basis of your lowest reimbursement fees for your most utilized CPT codes.
6. You must carefully analyze your costs in your practice. This includes all of your own costs for travel, education, automobile, and other expenses. If employers are taxed or required to furnish paid health insurance, your profits will immediately be affected. You must be in a position to reduce costs to meet the rising anticipated cost.
7. Record each insurance plan in which you participate and know the contract renewal date. This is necessary information in running the practice, but if you determine that you will terminate certain health plans, you must know your opt out provisions and the effect on your individual practice.
8. You must know your exit strategy. If you are planning to retire soon, you must know at what point changes will trigger your leaving and be certain that all necessary arrangements will be made. Check to be certain that all your employment agreements, shareholder agreements, and buy-sell agreements are in place.
9. You must stay informed. When Congress passes any bill, whether it is a version of the ones summarized or some other, you must be able to take quick action. Even if no legislation is passed, the current cuts scheduled for Medicare of 21% are still scheduled in January, 2010.