



Consultation Codes Survey Topline Report—Gastroenterology Consolidated Results

In April 2010, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE), the American College of Gastroenterology and the American Gastroenterological Association participated in the American Medical Association (AMA) survey on Medicare's elimination of consultation codes.

The survey was open from April 12, 2010 to April 20, 2010 and including the participation of 17 specialty societies. The three gastroenterology societies consolidated their results into one topline document. A total of 467 members of all three societies participated in the survey and about 340 respondents completed most questions.

Summary of Results

Among those GI physicians treating Medicare patients:

- Half (50%) of those who provide care to patients whose principal source of payment is Medicare work in a single specialty group. Almost one quarter (23%) work in solo practices

Among those GI physicians who completed the survey:

- Two-thirds (66%) of those who provide care to patients for whom Medicare is their principal source of payment say their administrative costs have increased as a result of Medicare's refusal to recognize consultation codes.
- Nearly all (98%) say their total revenue stream has decreased as a result of Medicare's decision to eliminate the use of consultation codes and require physicians to bill using other evaluation and management codes. About one-third (36%) say total revenue has decreased by over 15%.
- 29% say they have had to modify their practice or services. 21% of those who have made modifications say they reduced the number of new Medicare patients, and 12% say they reduced the amount of time spent with Medicare patients.
- 48% say they will defer purchase of new equipment and/or information technology, and 39% say they will eliminate staff in order to compensate for the consultation-related revenue changes. 35% say they will avoid patients with complex conditions.

Practice and Patient Demographics

1. Approximately what percentage of your current patients are covered by Medicare? Insert a number between 0 and 100%.

| | % of Responses |
|-----------|----------------|
| 1 – 25% | 18% |
| 26% - 50% | 63% |
| 51% - 75% | 17% |
| 76 – 100% | 1% |
| Total | 100% |

2. Which of the following categories best describes your practice?

| | % of Responses |
|--|----------------|
| Physician Office, Solo Practice | 23% |
| Physician Office, Single Specialty Group | 50% |
| Multi-Specialty Group | 15% |
| Hospital practice | 3% |
| Academic Health Center | 8% |
| Other (please specify_ | 1% |
| Total | 100% |

Number of Consultations

3. In 2009, approximately how many consultations did you perform each month in each of the following? Hospital or nursing home

| | % of Responses |
|---------------|----------------|
| 0 – 10 | 21% |
| 11 – 25 | 28% |
| 26 – 50 | 29% |
| 51 – 75 | 8% |
| 76 – 100 | 8% |
| More than 100 | 6% |
| Total | 100% |

4. In 2009, approximately how many consultations did you perform each month in each of the following? Your office or other outpatient setting

| | % of Responses |
|---------------|----------------|
| 0 – 10 | 5% |
| 11 – 25 | 12% |
| 26 – 50 | 31% |
| 51 – 75 | 13% |
| 76 – 100 | 22% |
| More than 100 | 17% |
| Total | 100% |

5. In 2009, approximately what percentage of your consultations were with patients who had been seen by you or another member of your specialty and group within the last three years? Insert a number between 0 and 100%.

| | % of Responses |
|-----------|----------------|
| 0 – 25% | 56% |
| 26% - 50% | 33% |
| 51% - 75% | 7% |
| 76 – 100% | 5% |
| Total | 100% |

Effects of Decision To Eliminate Use of Consultation Codes

6. How has Medicare’s decision to eliminate the use of consultation codes and require physicians to bill for these services using other evaluation and management codes impacted your practice’s total revenue stream?

| | <i>% of Responses</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| No impact | 0% |
| Decreased 1% to 5% | 10% |
| Decreased >5% to 10% | 22% |
| Decreased >10% to 15% | 30% |
| Decreased >15% to 20% | 23% |
| Decreased more than 20% | 13% |
| Increased 1% to 5% | 0% |
| Increased >5% to 10% | 0% |
| Increased >10% to 15% | 1% |
| Increased >15% to 20% | 0% |
| Increased more than 20% | 0% |
| Total | 100% |

7. Have you modified the number of Medicare patients and/or services you provide them?

| <i>Answer</i> | <i>% of Responses</i> |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 29% |
| No | 71% |
| Total | 100% |

8. Please identify how you have modified your practice and/or services. Check all that apply.

| | <i>% of those who said they made modifications (among approximately 340 respondents who completed most questions)</i> |
|---|---|
| Increased number of Medicare patients | 0% |
| Reduced number of new Medicare patients | 21% |
| Reduced number of established Medicare patients | 6% |
| No longer accepting new Medicare patients | 4% |
| No longer accepting established Medicare patients | 1% |
| Seeing more patients with complex cases/conditions | 2% |
| Stopped accepting or reduced Medicare consultation patients referred by their primary care or attending physician | 5% |
| Stopped providing reports back to primary care physicians for consultations provided to their Medicare patients | 5% |
| Stopped doing or reduced consultations on hospital inpatients | 9% |
| Stopped doing or reduced consultations on hospital outpatients | 4% |
| Stopped doing or reduced consultations on SNF patients | 4% |
| Stopped doing or reduced consultations in the office | 5% |
| Reduced the amount of time spent with Medicare patients | 12% |
| Other (please specify) | 4% |

9. Are you prohibited from eliminating consultations from your practice either through a contract or employment?

| | <i>% of Responses</i> |
|-------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 19% |
| No | 81% |
| Total | 100% |

10. Do you plan to compensate for consultation-related revenue changes in any of the following ways? Check all that apply.

| | % of Responses (among approximately 340 respondents who completed most questions) |
|---|---|
| Eliminate staff | 39% |
| Close satellite offices | 8% |
| Discontinue rural outreach | 7% |
| Avoid patients with complex conditions | 35% |
| Reduce level of chart documentation | 21% |
| Stop providing written report to primary care physician | 19% |
| Defer purchase of new equipment and/or information technology | 48% |
| Reduce patient care hours | 17% |
| Retire from the practice of medicine | 9% |
| Other (please specify) | 21% |