

**Consultation Codes Survey**  
**Topline Report – Consolidated Results**  
**May 2010 Results**  
**Revised 6/25/2010**  
**Data for use with Media Release**

In April 2010, 17 specialty societies participated in the AMA's survey on Medicare's elimination of consultation codes. AMA's Market Research team programmed and launched the survey. AMA's Advocacy staff provided the specialty societies with their individual survey links that were forwarded to members of each society. The email invitation is included below:

*On January 1, 2010, Medicare eliminated the use of all consultation codes except those for telemedicine and instructed physicians to bill for these services using the "most appropriate" remaining evaluation and management codes. The AMA and the **Specialty Name** are working with the American Group Management Association and 16 other specialty societies (listed below) to modify this policy. To gather data for this effort, we have designed a short survey that should take only 10 or 15 minutes to complete.*

*Your participation in this important survey will help us to understand and quantify how this policy is affecting physician. The survey, which can be accessed at **insert specialty-specific link**, will be open through close of business April 30. Results will be collated for individual specialties and across all specialties. If you are a member of more than one of the participating organizations, please fill out only one survey. Should you have any questions, please contact specialty staff name and contact information. Thank you for helping us make a difference for you.*

The survey remained open from April 12, 2010 to April 30, 2010. A total of 7,781 respondents participated in the survey; 6,911 respondents treated Medicare patients; about 5,500 completed most questions.

**Summary of Results**

- Among those physicians treating Medicare patients:
  - 30% say that more than half of their total patients are covered by Medicare. Almost one-quarter (23%) work in a solo practice. Another 39% work in a single specialty group.
  
- Among those physicians who completed the survey:
  - The majority (83%) 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.
  - 30% say they have had to modify their practice or services. 20% have reduced the number of new Medicare patients, 12% have reduced the amount of time spent with Medicare patients and 10% have reduced or eliminated consultations on hospital inpatients.
  - 39%-say they will defer purchase of new equipment and/or information technology in order to compensate for consultation-related revenue changes. More than one-third 34% say they will eliminate staff

## **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%	23%
26% - 50%	47%
51% - 75%	26%
76 – 100%	4%
Total	100%

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

	% of Responses
Physician Office, Solo Practice	23%
Physician Office, Single Specialty Group	39%
Multi-Specialty Group	14%
Hospital Practice	9%
Academic Health Center	13%
Other	3%
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	46%
11 – 25	18%
26 – 50	18%
51 – 75	6%
76 – 100	5%
More than 100	8%
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	19%
11 – 25	19%
26 – 50	26%
51 – 75	9%
76 – 100	11%
More than 100	16%
Total	100%

**Percentage of Consultations with New Patients**

**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%	67%
26% - 50%	19%
51% - 75%	7%
76 – 100%	7%
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?**

	% of Responses
No impact	4%
Decreased 1% to 5%	11%
Decreased >5% to 10%	20%
Decreased >10% to 15%	22%
Decreased >15% to 20%	18%
Decreased more than 20%	12%
Increased 1% to 5%	0%
Increased >5% to 10%	0%
Increased >10% to 15%	0%
Increased >15% to 20%	0%
Increased more than 20%	0%
Don’t know	12%
Total	100%

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

	% of Responses
Yes	30%
No	70%
Total	100%

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

	% of Responses (among approximately 5,500 respondents who completed most questions)
Increased number of Medicare patients	0%
Reduced number of new Medicare patients	20%
Reduced number of established Medicare patients	5%
No longer accepting new Medicare patients	5%
No longer accepting established Medicare patients	1%
Seeing more patients with complex cases/conditions	3%
Stopped accepting or reduced Medicare consultation patients referred by their primary care or attending physician	7%
Stopped providing reports back to primary care physicians for consultations provided to their Medicare patients	6%
Stopped doing or reduced consultations on hospital inpatients	10%
Stopped doing or reduced consultations on hospital outpatients	5%
Stopped doing or reduced consultations on SNF patients	4%
Stopped doing or reduced consultations in the office	6%
Reduced amount of time spent with Medicare patients	11%
Other	3%

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

	% of Responses
Yes	26%
No	74%
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 5,500 respondents who completed most questions)
Eliminate staff	34%
Close satellite office	9%
Discontinue rural outreach	10%
Avoid patients with complex conditions	22%
Reduce level of chart documentation	16%
Stop providing written report to primary care physician	19%
Defer purchase of new equipment and/or information technology	39%
Reduce patient care hours	16%
Retire from the practice of medicine	9%
Other	19%
None of the above	21%