Dear FCACC Members:

Many Florida Chapter members are working on your behalf every month; please take time to read the below report from the Payer Relations & Health Care Economics Chair David Wolinsky, MD, FACC, about the ways we are fighting for access and payment.

David Perloff, MD, FACC
President
Florida Chapter, American College of Cardiology

Payer Relations & Health Care Economics Update

CARDIAC PET
The Fall has always been the busiest time of year for the Payer Relations and Health Care Economics Committee. This year has been no exception with multiple “Whack-a-Mole” issues facing us. The most pressing issue has been the threat to cardiac PET imaging. Cardiac PET codes were surveyed this year by the AMA RUC. After careful deliberation the RUC recommended 9 PET codes with fair RVU assessments. Additionally, PET myocardial blood flow was accepted as a Level I code, meaning it was a billable procedure. This was sent to CMS for incorporation into the 2020 rule. In an unprecedented act, CMS refused to accept the RUC recommendations reducing suggested physician reimbursement by more than 40%. More importantly the technical was drastically leading to overall reimbursements to cardiac PET of reductions up to 70-80%. This cut would lead to closure of many cardiology PET labs and reduce access to valued cardiac care for a large portion of the Florida Medicare population.

A dramatic multi-societal effort to halt implementation was carried out. On a national level, ACC, ASNC, and SNMMI met with CMS on multiple occasions to discuss our concerns. The societies asked for legislative recommendations to not implement the Rule as was drafted.

A large grass roots effort was carried out urging members to reach out to their local Congressional representative urging their support of a legislative request. Additionally, invoices were needed to correct CMS’ faulty calculations. They were requested and supplied, especially by our Florida members. Strong support for corrective actions was garnered. Over 1000 ACC members sent letters to Congress which resulted in a bipartisan Congressional letter to CMS Administrator Varma urging that these cuts not be implemented and that further discussions be held. Many thanks to all our Florida ACC members who supported these efforts.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION
Florida cardiologists continue to be hampered by the burden of prior authorization when tests are being ordered according societal AUC. NIA, a radiology benefits manager continues to stonewall and many of the Florida Payers such as AVMED provide no channel to a physician to air a complaint. Please use the ACC PARTOOL, for each and every denial. Be sure to get the name of the physician who denied the test during the peer-to-peer peer discussion, include his/her name in your report, and notify the physician that his/her name will be recorded. In the meantime, I have had success generating meetings with the payer staff by going through the marketing directors who are deathly afraid of any letters to the editor.

OTHER ISSUES
Further news to cover in the next issue will be an update on the AUC PAMA mandate, upcoming changes to the Stark Law, and denial of payment for emergent inpatient ICD and pacemaker placement.

Many thanks to my co-chair Dr. David Nguyen who can handle many issues related to interventional and structural cardiology. Thanks to Dr. Louis Snyder of Delray Beach who joined the committee last fall and to Dr. Tom Lewandowski, who recently moved back to Florida. He is a former CAC representative and has also agreed to join the committee.

FCACC PILOT GRANT PROGRAM
Deadline: DECEMBER 1
The FCACC is looking for innovative programs to promote the quadruple aim of improving health care in Florida and enhancing the outreach of the Chapter. Seed grant money has been allocated by the Board of Directors in the total amount of $10,000 for the year 2020. Funding proposals can be considered for any program; priority will be given to the following three areas: community health, quality improvement and research, and professional development and outreach. To read the complete guidelines and to submit a proposal go to this link and complete the form.

Live & Local: State-wide CV Education Courses
FCACC members are experts and teachers, committed to a CV community that has the most up-to-date science at the bedside. The programs on this page have a member of the Florida Chapter, ACC, as a part of the planning committee.

FOLLOW US!
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Feel free to reach out with any issues at dwolinsk@gmail.com.

Missed last month's message? Find it here.