

# Dermatology Hit Hard by Medicare Reimbursement Cuts

HOUSTON, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, March 8, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent review of reimbursement cuts in dermatology has shown that dermatology has been significantly impacted by Medicare cuts and there are concerns that this could influence patient care.

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*Kyle Lauck, MD*

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) is a federal agency housed within the US Department of Health and Human Services which manages the Medicare and Medicaid health programs for US citizens. In addition to this responsibility, the agency is tasked with updating HIPPA regulations, certifying long term care facilities, certifying clinical laboratories and running the healthcare.gov website.

Despite these important duties, CMS also has a key role in physician billing through its regulation of evaluation and management (EM) codes. Recently, CMS has emphasized

increased reimbursement for E/M services with necessary balancing cuts in procedural services. To date, limited data exists on the trend of these adjustments in the field of dermatology.

A new study in SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine® analyzed the longitudinal analysis of reimbursement rates through time for common procedures performed by dermatologists to discover whether trends were similar to other medical fields. Lead study author, Kyle Lauck, MD and colleagues used a retrospective analysis of databases maintained by the CMS which aimed at assessing if Medicare reimbursement rates in dermatology followed other specialties. To accomplish this goal, the Medicare physician fee schedule look-up was analyzed and rates were adjusted for inflation.

Dr. Lauck and colleagues found that, for both procedural and evaluation and management codes, an average decline in reimbursement of about 10% was seen over a 10 year period in dermatology (2011 to 2021). Of note, fifteen out of twenty procedural codes experienced a decline with an average decrease of over 10%. The inflation adjusted decline in reimbursement was seen in other medical specialties including general surgery, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, otolaryngology and neurosurgery. Dr. Lauck concludes that within dermatology, the average decrease in reimbursement parallels other specialties but was smaller in magnitude. More

studies are needed to reveal the impact on these policies on patient care but patients and providers should be aware of this trend and work to halt further cuts to enable doctors to perform their duties without financial worry.

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SKIN: The Journal of Cutaneous Medicine® is a peer-reviewed online medical journal that is the official journal of The National Society for Cutaneous Medicine. The mission of SKIN is to provide an enhanced and accelerated route to disseminate new dermatologic knowledge for all aspects of cutaneous disease.

For more details please visit [www.jofskin.org](http://www.jofskin.org) or contact [jofskin@gmail.com](mailto:jofskin@gmail.com).

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