

Changes of Note for the New Year

Coding updates are just the tip of the iceberg as we begin 2019.

This issue of *FPM* features our annual review of changes resulting from the new Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (see page 23). In addition to the usual spate of code changes and payment updates, the final rule for 2019 also described several changes designed to lessen the burden of documenting evaluation and management services, including these:

- For an established patient's history and exam, physicians may note what has changed since the last visit or pertinent items that

have not changed, rather than re-documenting a defined list of required elements.

- For new or established patients, physicians no longer must re-enter information in the medical record regarding the chief complaint and history (including the history of present illness) that ancillary staff or the patient has already entered.

More significant documentation changes were delayed to 2021, including further relaxing of documentation requirements and a blended payment rate for some office visits — developments we will be following closely.

The new year brings changes to *FPM* as well. This issue is Dr. Ken Adler's last as our medical

editor. His understanding of the challenges family physicians face and his insight into solutions have helped *FPM* to deliver the practical, actionable content that makes the journal unique. Ken was an *FPM* author and peer reviewer for many years before his tenure as medical editor began in 2013, and we look forward to continuing our association with him for years to come.

Recruitment is underway for our next medical editor, whom we hope to introduce in the next issue. **FPM**



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