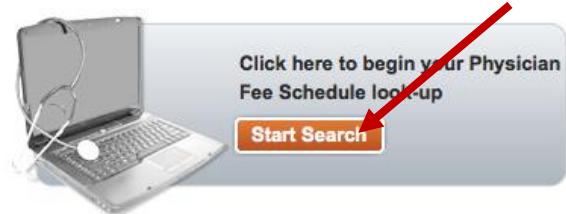


Optometric Documentation & Coding Consultants

April 2018: Did you know you can look up Medicare's fee schedule online?

Questions always seem to come in groups, just like celebrity deaths...or it could be observational bias. Either way, as Q2 started, we received several requests for the 2018 Medicare Fee Schedule or inquiries about how to find this information. The fee schedule can be found on CMS's website. You can either Google "Physician Fee Schedule Look Up" or type: <https://go.cms.gov/2aAOFIH>. Like most government-run websites, they have a ton of information that is very difficult to access. But once you learn to navigate the labyrinth, it reveals a great number of valuable secrets.

First, navigate to the Look-Up tool and click on "Start Search." From here you must accept their licensing agreement. Once you are into the actual search tool, you can define for what you are looking.



Notice on the screen below, you can select just pricing information, RVUs, All the info, etc. If you choose "All," you will get a lot of info that seems irrelevant for our normal purposes, but it will also provide the global periods for the CPT you are searching.

Physician Fee Schedule Search

Search Criteria

Begin your search below by selecting search criteria. Additional search criteria will appear depending on which selections you choose. Once your selections are complete, you will be asked to submit your criteria. All search criteria options displayed on this page are required.

Please select a year (see 'Notes for Selected Year' box for details):
 2018

Type of Information:
 Pricing Information
 Payment Policy Indicators
 Relative Value Units
 Geographic Practice Cost Index
 All

Select Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Criteria:
 Single HCPCS Code
 List of HCPCS Codes
 Range of HCPCS Codes

Select Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) Option:
 National Payment Account
 Specific MAC
 Specific Locality
 All MACs

Pricing by Single HCPCS Code for a MAC
 Enter values for:
 HCPCS Code:
 Modifier:

MAC:

[RESET SELECTION CRITERIA](#)

NOTES FOR SELECTED YEAR

2018: The Medicare Physician Fee Schedule update factor for 2018 is 0.5% and the conversion factor is 35.9998.

PFS UPDATE STATUS

Data last updated: 01/05/2018

Select "Specific MAC"

Below that you can choose to look by a single code, multiple codes, or a range of codes. Once you define for what you are looking, click Submit to retrieve the information.

Next, you will see a horizontally-oriented table with many pieces of information. The most commonly needed information is the "Non-Facility Price." This is the dollar value that a Medicare participating doctor will be reimbursed for the CPT code they looked up.

MODIFIER	MAC LOCALITY	NON-FACILITY PRICE	FACILITY PRICE	NON-FACILITY LIMITING CHARGE	FACILITY LIMITING CHARGE
	0000000	\$128.52	\$81.36	\$140.41	\$88.88

The last handy piece of information I'll mention is the global period. This is hiding to the far right on the horizontal table. You must scroll far over to find it. But it's nice to be able to look at a legitimate source, versus searching Google and finding a random article writing four years ago. Using primary sources like this is what allows you to

make solid decisions for your practice.

Every year you should evaluate your fee by comparing them to your top payers. Medicare may or may not be one of them, but it always seems to be the one benchmark against which optometrist judge their fee schedules. List out those top payers' reimbursements for your top 10-15 CPT codes and make sure they make sense. You may notice that you are still charging \$85 for a pachy when it now reimburses \$18. Or you might be only charging \$55 for a 99213, when it now reimburses \$75. You need to set your fees at what makes sense for your office and local market. But if your fees are grossly out-of-whack, you may want to consider adjusting them. You don't want to leave money on the table, nor do you want to have write-offs that make your CPA scream.