

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society



Your Advocate.

Your Resource.

Your Profession.



IMPACT UPDATE

MedChi's mission is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, patients, and the public health.



From President Eric Wargotz, M.D.

For me personally, to understand mattering in medicine is to recognize that the clinical encounter is not merely a transaction of data and prescriptions, but a profound exchange of human significance.

For the patient, the experience of illness is often characterized by a stripping away of agency and a sense of invisibility. When a person enters the medical system, they frequently feel reduced to a set of symptoms or a demographic data point. In this context, a physician's ability to confer a sense of mattering is a potent clinical intervention. This begins with ensuring the patient feels noticed, appreciated for their unique history, supported by a committed care team, and recognized as a partner in



From CEO Gene Ransom, III

In a recent enforcement action, the Maryland Insurance Administration found that Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company improperly "downcoded" evaluation and management (E&M) claims submitted by physicians, reducing reimbursement levels without following Maryland law. The investigation determined that the insurer altered billing codes to lower-paying levels and forced physicians to appeal in order to receive proper reimbursement.

The MIA concluded that these practices violated Maryland's insurance statutes governing claim payment and processing and imposed an administrative penalty on the company while ordering the practice to cease.

the healing process. As patients increasingly navigate AI-driven health insights, the physician's role is to validate the human being behind the screen. By actively listening and integrating a patient's personal values into a shared decision-making model, the physician transforms a passive recipient of care into an active contributor to their own health. This sense of adding value is transformative; research consistently shows that patients who feel they matter are more likely to adhere to complex treatment regimens and report higher levels of psychological resilience during chronic illness.

However, a discussion on mattering in physicians' lives is incomplete if it does not address the person behind the stethoscope. The medical environment continues to grapple with systemic burnout, much of which is driven by "anti-mattering", the feeling of being an interchangeable, undervalued cog in a vast administrative machine. For physicians, mattering is the primary antidote to professional exhaustion. A physician's sense of significance is deeply tied to their professional identity; they must feel that their specific expertise is indispensable and that their sacrifices are seen by their institutions. When a physician is bogged down by onerous documentation that prioritizes volume over value, their sense of adding value is eroded. To combat this, the modern medical field is shifting toward a culture that prioritizes professional fulfillment. This involves dismantling the stigma around physician mental health and creating environments where doctors are encouraged to mentor one another and participate in peer-support networks. When a physician feels they belong to a community that relies on their unique contributions, their resilience is fortified.

The intersection of these two lives, the patient and the physician, creates a cycle of mattering. A physician who feels supported and valued by their organization has the emotional bandwidth to practice the "therapeutic presence" necessary to make a patient feel significant. Conversely, when a patient expresses genuine gratitude and engages actively in their care, they reinforce the physician's sense of adding value, thereby protecting the physician against the cynicism of burnout. This reciprocal relationship suggests that mattering is not a finite resource to be distributed, but a relational energy that expands when it is shared.

Ultimately, the medical field must move beyond the purely biological model of health to embrace this psychological reality. Mattering provides the underpinning of well-being that can bridge the gap between clinical efficiency and human compassion. By intentionally cultivating a culture where both the healer and the healed feel essential and valued, the healthcare system can transition from a place of mere treatment to a sanctuary of genuine care. In an age of unprecedented technological advancement, the simple, profound act of making another human being feel that they matter remains the most powerful medicine available.

MedChi strongly supports the actions taken by Governor Moore and Insurance Commissioner Marie Grant to hold insurers accountable when they violate Maryland law. This action sends a clear message that abusive insurance practices will not be tolerated in Maryland.

Downcoding is not a harmless administrative adjustment. It undermines physician judgment, delays payment for legitimate care, and ultimately harms patients by destabilizing the physician practices that care for them.

Evaluation and management codes reflect the complexity of a patient visit and are determined by the physician based on the clinical work performed. Altering those codes without following proper procedures can reduce payment for care already delivered and create administrative burdens that take time away from patients.

MedChi looks forward to continuing to work with state leaders to ensure fair reimbursement practices and a stable environment for physicians delivering care across Maryland.



MEDCHI PRESENTS

REGISTER TODAY!

SPRING HOUSE OF DELEGATES MEETING 2026

SUNDAY, APRIL 26TH
8:00AM - 11:00AM

*VIA ZOOM 

7:30 am ~ Coffee & Credentialing
8:00 am ~ Legislative Panel Session
9:00 am ~ HOD Convenes
11:00 am ~ Adjournment

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#MedChiHOD www.medchi.org/hod

Participation in the Spring House of Delegates Meeting is open to current MedChi Members.

Not a MedChi Member? Join Now!

Center for
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Employed Physician

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