

## 2018 KEY LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

### PROTECT MEDICAID ACCESS

**PROBLEM:** Medicaid payment rates have historically been too low to ensure an adequate provider network for enrollees, negatively affecting access to medically necessary services. This affects not only primary care providers but also access to specialty services. The application of payment increases to all physicians, regardless of specialty, is important not just to encourage private practice physicians to participate in the Medicaid program, but also for employed and hospital-based physicians who care for many Medicaid patients often in emergency situations.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- 2012: To address health care expansion and a significant lack of physician participation in Medicaid, the State increased reimbursement for Evaluation and Management (E&M) codes in Medicaid to 100% of Medicare rates for all physicians who accept Medicaid.
- 2015: Due to budget shortfalls, E&M codes were reduced mid-year from 100% of Medicare to 87% of Medicare. MedChi, through strong advocacy, fought for restoration and successfully won an increase to 92% of Medicare.
- 2016: MedChi requested full restoration of the rate and successfully worked with the General Assembly to increase rates to 96% of Medicare. While Governor Hogan ultimately did not agree to the method used for funding, he did increase E&M code reimbursement to 94%, effective October 1, 2016.
- 2017: MedChi continued to advocate for restoration of funding to full Medicare parity. However, a significant Medicaid deficit coupled with uncertainty at the federal level raised the likely potential for further decrease in E&M code reimbursement. However, MedChi was successful in maintaining the 94% rate.
- 2018: Governor Hogan included \$17.6 million dollars in the budget to maintain Medicaid rates for the coming fiscal year. This is particularly notable as numerous other provider reimbursement rates, such as developmental disability and community mental health providers and providers who contract with the Department of Human Services to care for children in out-of-home placements, were capped significantly below statutory mandates.

**SOLUTION:** Support physician participation and protect the integrity of the Medicaid program by advocating to retain the current budget allocation for E&M code reimbursement for all physicians who care for Medicaid enrollees with the ultimate goal of restoration to 100% of Medicare rates in future years.

**WHAT TO DO:** Call/write/e-mail your legislators. Request their support protection of the current budget appropriation for Medicaid E & M Code reimbursement rates. Contact MedChi for legislative contact information at 1-800-492-1056.