

## 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 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 the Medicaid program to 100% of Medicare rates for all physicians who accept Medicaid. MedChi applauded the reimbursement rate increase.
- 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: MedChi will continue to advocate for restoration to full Medicare parity.

**SOLUTION:** Support physician participation and protect the integrity of the Medicaid program by advocating for full restoration of E&M code reimbursement for all physicians who care for Medicaid enrollees to 100% of Medicare rates.

**WHAT TO DO:** Call/write/e-mail your legislators. Request their support to return reimbursement of E&M codes to 100% of Medicare rates for all physicians who participate in the Medicaid program. Contact MedChi for legislative contact information at 1-800-492-1056.