

Dear Ms. Kurth,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to the 2017/2018 ICA Physicians' Fee Schedule. As I trust you are aware, patients treated for work injuries require substantially more time and effort on the part of the treating physician. Procedures performed on such patients are often more complex and require greater skill and effort. Patients are generally much more difficult to manage and non-medical issues frequently arise, requiring a great deal of time and effort to address. Furthermore, many of the services we routinely provide are typically not reimbursed at all. This includes communicating with employers, nurse case managers, completing work status forms, determining impairment and minimizing disability.

The idea that lowering physician reimbursement will attract more providers is quite frankly counterintuitive. It is difficult to imagine a scenario whereby experienced, competent physicians will choose to treat industrial patients when reimbursements are cut so drastically. It makes little sense to spend time dealing with all of the non-medical issues that arise in the work comp setting without the expectation of receiving a reasonable fee for services rendered and for our time in rendering them. This will lead inexorably to fewer qualified and experienced physicians willing to treat industrial patients and to a lower quality of care.

The ICA Physicians' Fee Schedule has been developed as a reasonable and fair methodology for compensating physicians for their work in caring for industrial patients. As an experienced physician who treats a large number of such patients in my practice, I believe strongly that the proposed changes to the Fee Schedule would be extremely detrimental to all stakeholders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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