

# AAFP News: *AFP Edition*

## *Policy and Health Issues in the News*

### **Study: One-Third of Prescriptions Go Unfilled**

Nearly one-third of first-time prescriptions are not filled, according to a recently published study. Canadian researchers evaluated the electronic health records of 15,961 patients in a primary care network that included 131 physicians to estimate the incidence of primary non-adherence and to determine which drug, patient, and physician characteristics were associated with nonadherence. They found that slightly more than 31% of all initial drug prescriptions were not filled within nine months. Nonadherence was highest for expensive drugs and preventive therapies for chronic conditions. In addition, patients with higher copayments, recent hospitalization, and more severe comorbid conditions were at increased risk of non-adherence. Antibiotic prescriptions were most likely to be filled. Patients who had more visits with the prescribing physician were more likely to fill their prescriptions, as were older patients. Physician gender and years in practice were factored into the analysis because these characteristics have been shown to influence prescribing decisions. However, no significant correlation was found between these characteristics and nonadherence. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20140428nonadherencestudy.html>.

### **Survey Finds High Physician Salaries Are Not Linked to Job Satisfaction**

Family physicians may not be the highest-paid specialists in the medical field, but most of them report that they would choose a career in medicine if they had to make the decision again, according to a recent survey. The Medscape Physician Compensation Report 2014 found that the specialists who ranked among the highest paid in 2013 reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with the profession. For example, anesthesiologists, radiologists, and orthopedists were among the highest-paid subspecialists, but they reported the lowest levels of career satisfaction. Among the three specialties, the percentage that said they would still choose to go into medicine if given a second chance ranged from 44% to 47%. Conversely, 67% of family physicians said they would choose medicine again as a career. Despite being satisfied with the medical profession overall, the survey indicated that family physicians do not feel the same about their specialty; only 32% said they would choose family medicine again. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/practice-professional-issues/20140428medscapecomprpt.html>.

### **AAFP Analysis Can Help Physicians Navigate Medicare Payment Data**

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) has created a web page to help physicians communicate with patients and the news media about how to interpret recently published Medicare payment data. The page includes a link to a detailed analysis of how the data can and should be used, and outlines the consequences of releasing a raw data file in the absence of important medical context, such as an explanation of the costs associated with operating a physician practice. A key concern about the data is that they do not indicate the severity or complexity of conditions a physician handled during a given patient visit, and provide no way to measure the quality of care delivered. Payment data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services became available earlier this year pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act request for information about amounts paid to individual Medicare physicians. Publication of the data generated considerable attention in the news media, and various reports highlighted a handful of subspecialists who receive millions in Medicare payments. However, of the highest-paid 2% of Medicare physicians by specialty, family physicians ranked well below the top earners. The AAFP analysis is available at <http://www.aafp.org/advocacy/informed/legal/transparency.html>; for more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/government-medicine/20140423paymentdataguide.html>.

### **Immunization Information Added to App**

The AAFP mobile app has been updated with a new immunizations resource area. The app now allows family physicians to search immunization recommendations by age, illness, and special circumstances; look up child and adolescent immunizations by age; access information on coding, laws and regulations, and vaccine resources; and read specific details about each immunization, including vaccine names, who should be vaccinated, dosing series and schedule, and contraindications and precautions. iPhone users can download the app at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/american-academy-family-physicians/id646918504?mt=8>, and Andriod users can download it at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=vspringboard.aafp.activity>.

— *AAFP AND AAFP NEWS STAFF*

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