

A Newsletter for the Members of the New Mexico Chapter - Winter 2021



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Dear NM ACEP Members:

Welcome to our Winter Quarterly Newsletter!

Many of us around the state have received vaccines and find relief in the decline of COVID in our state and are thrilled to see our community gaining access to the vaccine! At our most recent Quarterly Meeting, we had the pleasure of the attendance of Dr. Heather Marshall who serves as National ACEP Reimbursement Committee Chair. We are so fortunate to have her as a NM ACEP member! She is one of our guest contributors to the

NM ACEP Newsletter this Quarter – providing a HIGHLY informative NM ACEP Reimbursement Report. I strongly encourage you all to review her guest contribution. We all gain from her wealth of knowledge. In addition, Dr. Jessica Evans-Wall, second year resident at UNM, wrote a moving piece that I encourage you all to read.

We wish you a happy and healthy spring.

Margaret Greenwood-Ericksen, MD
President, NM ACEP

New Mexico ACEP Reimbursement Report

Heather Anne Marshall, MD, FACEP

(Data provided thanks to David McKenzie, ACEP Reimbursement Director and Michael Granovsky MD, Reimbursement and Coding Course Director from National ACEP Reimbursement Conference Report)

1. ED volumes are down nationally 20% from January 2020 to November 2020.

- More significant decreases in Peds ED volume —> 50% decrease
- Urgent Care volumes down 43%
- Mostly decrease in discretionary patients although some critical illnesses deferred as well

2. The CMS Final Rule changed documentation requirements for E/M levels to be based on Medical Decision Making, highest 2 of the following 3 categories:

- Number and complexity of problems addressed
- Amount of data reviewed and analyzed
- Risk of complications/morbidity

***** This will be implemented for Office codes in 2021, not likely implemented for ED until 2023. I incorrectly stated in the presentation that this change for ED was in effect now. Special thanks to Rachel Tuuri for identifying this error.**

3. Medicare Physician Fee schedule was released January 7, 2021 after the passage of the Consolidated Omnibus Bill December 27, 2020.

- Overall 2% increase for Emergency Medicine
- We were facing an 11% or more decrease, much advocacy on the federal level allowed for this change.
- Emergency Medicine got an increase in RVU's for codes 99283, 99284, 99285
- Codes 99281, 99282, and critical care 99291 are neutral
- There was a decrease in the conversion factor (the dollar amount CMS pays for each RVU) to \$34.89, but because the RVUs for the higher codes increased it leads to an overall increase in reimbursement.

99281 \$22.33
99282 \$43.27
99283 \$72.93
99284 \$123.87
99285 \$180.75

99291 \$220.87

4. New opportunities for revenue due to Covid:

- Facilities can bill for Bamlanivab infusion (M0239), \$22.98
- Covid counseling by physicians or PA/NPs at testing sites (tents/parking lots/drive throughs) can be billed as an ED professional fee if 5 criteria are met:
 - 1- discuss need for immediate isolation
 - 2- informing of immediate contacts
 - 3- review signs/symptoms of Covid19
 - 4- inform patients that if they test positive they will be called by a public health worker
 - 5- discuss services that might help a patient successfully quarantine •
- Telehealth options expanded:
 - 1- Video/audio (ie. Zoom) can be used on the same campus and these encounters should be billed as if face-to-face
 - 2- Emergency Physicians can now bill ED codes for Telehealth (were not able to do this previously. Currently 99281-99285 are eligible, through the end of 2021. We anticipate likely having some of our codes added permanently, but will need to wait for the end of 2021 to determine which codes. Some observation codes are also allowed.
 - 3- Change in teaching physician rule such that Telehealth can be used for resident oversight. In rural locations this change is permanent, in metropolitan areas only through end of 2021.

5. Facility charges changes

- Hospital pricing transparency rules went into effect January 1, 2021

6. MAT in the ED now has a professional services codes G2213

- G2213 is worth 1.3 work RVU's and 1.89 total RVU's
- You need to write a note demonstrating medical necessity. ACEP will release language within the next few weeks with some examples.

7. MIPS is complicated

- MIPS has allowed groups to opt out of 2020 with a hardship exception. This will make available bonus dollars quite small
- We anticipate changes to MIPS program next year.

A Hard time for Dreaming

Jessica Evans-Wall, HO2, UNM

A knight is sworn to valor, their heart knows only virtue, their might upholds the weak, their word speaks only truth.

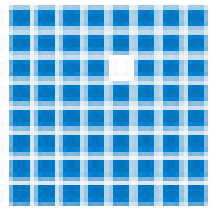
These words inspired a childhood of romance, the dream of fighting for a just cause, of aiding anyone in need, of serving the ideals of equality and compassion. A long road to medicine later, and I am standing in the small makeshift resuscitation room in what used to be the Emergency Department's psychiatric safe area, preparing to intubate a patient

with worsening hypoxia from COVID-19. Some days this fight against COVID feels like the battle I always dreamt of, our noble team struggling against the odds, striving to provide the chance that patient by patient the humans most severely affected by this still novel disease have the greatest chance of hugging their children again. Some days it feels like I am a cog in the wheel of disparity in medicine by not being able to spend enough time on the phone with patients' family members, jumping quickly to code conversations in the concern of the moment. We know that patients of native heritage were and are disproportionately represented in the 3,400 (as of 2/8) NM COVID-19 death toll. We know that here and throughout the US, communities of color are more affected by this virus. Was I impatient using the phone interpreter with my Spanish speaking patient; did I prematurely close on a diagnosis due to the difficulty of them hearing the speaker phone? How are we as health care providers adding to this imbalance and how can we better combat it? The resident selection process at UNM is recognizing that our provider population does not mirror our patient population and is working towards helping the future move towards having more even representation of our patient demographics and backgrounds represented in our providers, working towards increasing trust through representation. [>> READ MORE](#)

Welcome New Members!

Carolyn K Bryan, FACEP
Eleni M Bucuvalas, MD
Benny Chen, MD
Patrick A Craddock
Ashley Davis, DO
Dominic DiDomenico, DO
Brittany Ebbing, MD
Rebecca K Fastl
Christopher B Guest, MD
Neehar Kundurti, MD
Danielle Nicole Mascarenas, MD
Eric Ohlson
Rylee Samander
Lauren Elizabeth Thorp, DO
Kailee Weiler

FROM NATIONAL ACEP



American College of Emergency Physicians®

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ACEP Quick List: Upcoming Events and Deadlines

Feb. 17: [#RealTimeVaccineChat](#) happening on Twitter (2 p.m. CT)

Feb. 17: [Free webinar](#) focused on vaccine hesitancy (3 p.m. CT)

Feb. 18: Free webinar: [The EMTALA Complaint Process](#) (2 p.m. CT)

Feb. 24: Virtual Grand Rounds – "[Simulation: OB Emergencies with EMRA](#)"

March 1: Nominations due for [ACEP Leadership Awards](#) and [Wellness Center of Excellence Award](#)

March 14: Applications due for [EM Innovators of the Year](#) competition

March 22: Nominations due for [ACEP Board of Directors, Council Office](#)

April 19-21: [Virtual Advanced Pediatric Emergency Medical Assembly](#)

July 25-27: [Leadership & Advocacy Conference](#) (Washington, DC)



Stay current with the [COVID-19 Center](#). It's your one-stop-shop for clinical and legislative updates.

New Resource: COVID-19 Data Visualizations

ACEP's newest resource provides visualizations of U.S. emergency department data across three categories: total visits, COVID-like illness visits, and influenza-like illness visits. The data are available at both national and Health and Human Services (HHS) regional resolutions and across several timescales (e.g., 7-day, 30-day, 90-day). It's sortable by time and region. Data is updated weekly. [View the visualizations](#).

Vaccine Hesitancy Webinar: Register for “[This is Our Shot: How EM Docs Empower Patients to End the Pandemic](#),” a free webinar hosted by ACEP’s Diversity, Inclusion and Health Equity Section at 3 p.m. CT on Feb 17. Speakers: Pilar Ortega, MD; Ugo Ezenkwele, MD, MPH, FACEP and Robert Rodriguez, MD. Moderated by: Tracy MacIntosh, MD, MPH, FACEP.

The February 10 edition of the [Capital \(30\) Minutes webinar](#) provided updates on COVID relief, physician mental health and more.

Quick Links: [COVID-19 Field Guide](#) | [COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit](#) | [COVID-19 Microlearning Education](#)

The COVID-19 Crisis is Uniquely Exhausting - ACEP Can Help

It’s vital to prioritize your own mental health and this is an especially vulnerable time of year in an extremely stressful environment. Take advantage of these resources whenever you need them:

- Did you know your ACEP membership comes with [three free counseling or coaching sessions](#) available through phone, text or online chat? And for a small extra fee, you can add on **financial and/or legal assistance**.
- The [Physician Wellness Hub](#) can help you find the right support, whether you’d like to talk with a peer or a professional counselor.

It’s a great time to gently check in with your friends, family and colleagues. Worried about saying the wrong thing? Read these [peer support basics](#).

Want to remind your team about on-site support options? [Create a mental health care access map](#). Already have one? Resend the map so your coworkers know how to find support during the challenging weeks ahead.

ACEP hosted two Theater of War performances in 2020 and recently partnered with the Infectious Disease Society of America on a [podcast](#) discussing how these performances can help EM physicians process the unprecedented hardships of working in the ED during a pandemic. [Learn more](#).

Last but not least: If you’re passionate about peer support in emergency medicine, we invite you to join [ACEP’s Peer Support Project](#).

Regulatory News

Answering Your Questions About the New Medicare Add-on for MAT in the ED

EM physicians can start getting reimbursed by Medicare for MAT services you deliver in the emergency department (ED)! This is a policy that ACEP strongly advocated for and helped

secure in the 2021 Medicare physician fee schedule regulation (the major annual reg that impacts Medicare payments for physicians and other health care practitioners). In that reg, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized a proposal to create a new add-on code for MAT (G2213) that can be billed in addition to an ED evaluation and management (E/M) code during an ED visit. [READ MORE](#)

Catch up on the latest federal regulatory news with ACEP's [Regs and Eggs](#) blog:

- [Breaking Down President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act](#) - February 4
- [X-ing the X-Waiver: The Fight Continues!](#) - January 28, 2021
- [At the Buzzer! CMS' Last Minute Regulatory Actions](#) - January 21, 2021
- [Major Crisis Averted \(for Now\): Rather than Medicare Payment Reductions, a Raise May be Coming Your Way In 2021](#) - January 7, 2021

ACEP Member Resources

Prepare for your continuous EM board certification with ***Critical Decision's* [2020 LLSA Literature Review](#) issue (free member benefit)**. Get the highlights from each ABEM article to make your studying faster and more productive.

Podcast fans: [ACEP's podcast family](#) includes *Frontline*, *ACEP Now*, *Annals of EM*, *Critical Decisions* and *JACEP Open + EMergence*, a new EM innovation podcast.

Latest Pain Management and Opioid-Related Resources:

- Latest *Frontline* podcasts: [ACEP Pain and Addiction Care in the ED \(PACED\) Program](#) with Dr. Alexis La Pietra and Cathlyn Robinson & [California Bridge Program](#) with Dr. Alicia (Kurtz) Gonzalez
- ACEP's **Managing Acute Pain (MAP) point-of-care tool** was recently updated. It's available on the [ACEP website](#) and within the emPOC app ([Mac App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)).

PEER Can Help You Cram for the ConCert Exam

Getting ready for the spring ConCert Exams? ACEP has tools that can help! PEER is the leading resource for review and self-assessment. You can check your readiness with a free PEER pretest. [Learn more](#).

CORD 2021 Academic Assembly

CORD is excited to launch its 'Virtually Unstoppable' Academic Assembly on April 12-15, 2021. Registration information coming soon! Visit www.cordem.org for updates.

From the Emergency Medicine Foundation:

- **Show your love for EM research this Valentine's Day!** For every EM practitioner who watches [this video](#), Vapotherm will donate \$10 (\$20 per EM resident) to the Emergency Medicine Foundation.
 - **[EMF and AFFIRM have announced a new \\$40,000 grant in honor of Dr. Tamara O'Neal](#)**. Apply by March 31.
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News From ABEM

ABEM Issues Statement on its Commitment to Maintaining Certification Standards

Feb 08, 2021

The American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) understands that this past year was particularly challenging for emergency physicians, especially early career physicians. Every physician member of the ABEM Board of Directors is clinically active and understands the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruptions affecting our specialty have also affected ABEM certification. [Read the full statement here](#).

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