

Cost Data Collection Update – October 2018

What is the purpose of H.R. 3729, the “Comprehensive Operations, Sustainability and Transport Act of 2017?”

- Medicare Ambulance Add-On Payments, an important supplemental reimbursement source from Medicare, expired on January 1, 2018.
- Congressional action was needed to restore the add-on payments and they were extended with some reductions by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 until December 31, 2022.
- There is a current lack of cost reporting data among suppliers of ground ambulance services.
- This legislation would help CMS understand how much it costs to provide ground ambulance services to Medicare beneficiaries.
- This act would reauthorize the add-on payments for five years as well as create a cost-reporting system that will lead to improvements in the Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule and adequate payment rates for Medicare transports.
- H.R. 3729 will authorize CMS to design and launch a cost reporting system.

What does the implementation look like?

- Pre-Rulemaking — CMS will engage stakeholders to solicit recommendations.
- Rulemaking — CMS will publish a proposal for collecting cost data then seek public comment.
- Final Rule — CMS will issue a final rule after reviewing public input.
- Launch — CMS will select ambulance services to submit data.
- Phase One — All ambulance service suppliers will provide data on the characteristics of their operation such as the type of supplier (e.g. volunteer rescue squad, private company, third service, etc.).
- Phase Two — A survey will collect cost data from a statistically significant number of each group of supplier and provider to obtain costs and other data.

What will this mean for ambulance service providers who are selected to provide data?

- This is not like Medicaid cost reporting, state reporting, or GEMT reporting.
- Costs for providing services vary greatly due to differing state, local, and agency protocols like bundling.
- Different providers have different fee structures and CMS needs the whole range.
- A representative sampling of providers will be selected to report cost, revenue, utilization, and other information as determined by CMS.
- Data will be collected each year from 2020 through 2024.
- Cost reporting will continue at least every three years from 2025 on.
- Future reimbursement will be dependent on the accuracy and completeness of the data compiled.

How can you take action?

- [HR 3729 Bill Tracker](#)
- [IAFC Action Center](#)
- Sign up for email updates @ [AAA Cost Data Collection Information](#) page
- Sign up for the [AAA Webinar series](#)
- Attend upcoming events, such as the Texas Ambulance Association's [Ambulance Cost Data Collection Seminar](#) on November 2, 2018 (available to members and non-members of the TAA)
- Understand what will be required of you and be prepared to collect the required data if your agency is selected
- View the [AAA's report](#) from the 2018 Annual Conference

How can Digitech help you?

If you are selected, Digitech will support you through the cost data collection process by providing relevant revenue data and other resources and tools. Our reporting and data mining systems will ease the delivery of required revenue data for our clients. If you have questions about what this all means and how it may affect you or your service, do not hesitate to reach out to us.

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