

December 27, 2019



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As 2019 comes to a close, COA would like to wish its members, partners and other industry professionals a safe and happy holiday season. As we reflect on the past year for the industry, we would like to provide the readers of the COA Report a look at the most accessed articles from the year. Our regular publication will resume Friday, Jan. 3.

[A warning from a doctor who has done thousands of steroid injections for arthritis](#)



The Atlantic

From Oct. 18: After giving birth to a baby, a young woman told her nurses at Boston Medical Center that she was having pain in her hip. That happens sometimes after births, says Ali Guermazi, one of the doctors involved. As he recounts the case from a few years ago, he looked at X-rays and saw a small amount of extra fluid in the joint. Otherwise things looked normal. [READ MORE](#)

[Anthem clarifies recent E&M services billed with modifier 25 policy](#)



CMA

From April 22: The California Medical Association recently met with Anthem Blue Cross to express concerns over its recently announced policy aimed at addressing inappropriate use of modifier -25. Modifier 25 allows separate payment for a significant, separately identifiable E&M service provided on the same day as a minor procedure or other reported health care service. Per the new policy, Anthem will deny an E&M service with a modifier 25 billed on the day of a related procedure when there is a recent service or procedure for the same or similar diagnosis on record for the same provider (or a provider with the same specialty within the same group TIN). [READ MORE](#)

[Cannabis and cannabinoids may be effective for pain control via select routes of administration](#)



Clinical Pain Advisor

From Oct. 8: Cannabis and/or cannabinoids, when consumed through certain routes of administration, may reduce pain levels significantly, according to a systematic review and meta-analysis published in the Journal of the American Pharmacists Association. Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD) are the 2 active ingredients in cannabis responsible for pain mitigation, with bioavailability and analgesic effect that depend on the administration route. [READ MORE](#)

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Stem cell implant knee osteoarthritis



KZA

From Sept. 20: Question: Our surgeons are harvesting adipose tissue and creating an injectable implant that they are injecting in the knee for treatment of osteoarthritis. We want to verify that our use of an unlisted CPT code is correct. We have some payors who do reimburse for this service; others require the patient to be self-pay. Answer: Thanks for your question. You are correct in reporting an unlisted CPT code until the end of 2019. The AMA released new Category III codes on July 1, 2019 that will require the use of the new codes for tracking purposes as of January 1, 2020. [READ MORE](#)

Anthem Blue Cross makes more contract changes



Anthem Blue Cross

From July 8: Be on the lookout for another letter from Anthem Blue Cross announcing contract changes for their PPO providers. Currently, providers have one year to bill a claim for a PPO patient (90 days for HMO patients). Anthem is changing this to only 90 days from the date of service for PPO patients. If you do not submit your claim within 90 days, Anthem will deem the claim as being submitted untimely and they will refuse payment. [READ MORE](#)

Physicians decry unintended consequences of California's surprise billing laws



CMA

From Nov. 8: A new survey of California physicians illustrates serious unintended consequences from California's surprise billing law (AB 72) that will have long term impacts on patient access to care if not corrected. While the California law has protected patients from surprise bills, physicians are reporting serious problems that will substantially increase health care costs by accelerating consolidation in the health care market, jeopardizing the emergency care safety net and restricting patient access to in-network physicians. [READ MORE](#)

A major challenge for health care reform



California Health Care Foundation

From April 16: It was the summer of 2017, and Sanjay Mishra, MD, was on his way home to Indianapolis with his two children. They were in the airport when he collapsed and went into cardiac arrest. Quick-thinking bystanders administered CPR, and first responders called his wife in search of medical information that might save his life. His wife Seema Verma — yes, the administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services — spent the next few hours on the phone frantically trying to piece together Mishra's health record. [READ MORE](#)

New guidance attempts to resolve confusion regarding the removal of TKA from IPO list



AAOS

From April 16: On Jan. 8, in a major win for AAOS' advocacy efforts, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued unprecedented guidance to help resolve confusion regarding the removal of total knee arthroplasty (TKA) from the Medicare inpatient-only (IPO) list. The 2018 Medicare Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) Final Rule included a policy change allowing for payment of TKA procedures in either the hospital inpatient or outpatient setting. [READ MORE](#)

Getting through the night: Tips for handling trauma on call



AAOS

From May 31: During the AAOS 2019 Annual Meeting Instructional Course Lecture titled "Top Tips for Your Practice," four clinicians offered pointers and pearls in their practice areas of trauma, hand and wrist, and tumor—geared for orthopaedic surgeons who may not specialize in those areas. Lisa K. Cannada, MD, an orthopaedic trauma surgeon in Jacksonville, Fla., offered practical, perhaps soothing, advice to surgeons outside the Level 1 trauma center environment, including any who take call and may find themselves "alone in the middle of the night" with a seriously injured patient. [READ MORE](#)

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