**BIDEN ADMINISTRATION REVEALS MEDICARE PRIORITIES**

This year’s Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) and HOPD/ASC proposed payment rules were the first annual updates to Medicare reimbursement under the new Biden administration and US Health & Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra.

**MPFS**

Physicians saw a 3.75% payment increase in 2021 due to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA), an increase that is scheduled to expire and cause significant cuts to reimbursement unless Congress steps in. Some specialties, such as vascular surgery, are also in line for additional cuts due to clinical labor pricing updates.

**HOPD/ASC**

The Biden administration reversed course on changes finalized in 2020 by the outgoing Trump administration that gave more discretion to clinicians on site of service for outpatient procedures. This includes proposals to remove 258 procedures from the ASC Covered Procedures List (ASC-CPL) and reinstate the inpatient-only (IPO) list.

**ASCs under Cyberattack**

Cybersecurity attacks pose a serious threat to ASCs and may jeopardize your business, reputation and patients’ protected health information (PHI). Many cybercriminals target small businesses due to perceived security vulnerabilities. To ensure the safety and security of your center and to protect your patients’ PHI, here are some simple and effective steps that your ASC can take:

- Implement two-factor authentication
- Build staff awareness of phishing schemes
- Use unique, complex and frequently changed passwords

**ONLY 30% OF PHYSICIANS PRACTICE INDEPENDENTLY**

New research released by the nonprofit Physicians Advocacy Institute shows:
- 70% of US physicians were employed by hospital systems or other corporate entities, such as private equity firms and health insurers, at the beginning of 2021.
- Hospital systems and other corporate entities continued to drive consolidation in healthcare by aggressively acquiring physician practices throughout 2019 and 2020.
- The sharpest increase in acquisitions and employment during 2019 and 2020 was by corporate entities, such as private equity firms and health insurers (32%).

View the full studies referenced here and subscribe at www.ascassociation.org/ascphysicianbrief.