

## What's on Your Mind: Open Questions

### QUESTION:

What is MACRA and how will it impact physician's work?

### ANSWER:

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) passed with bipartisan support in April of 2015. The law provides guidance on many issues, but one generating interest is how MACRA structures payment for physicians caring for Medicare enrollees.

In effect, MACRA repeals the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) Formula that has been the foundation of Medicare Part B reimbursement rates and replaces it with a new payment method. MACRA's value-based payment programs will pay participating providers on the quality and effectiveness of the care they provide. These payment programs encourage medical home models and accountable care organizations, and include potential rate increases for providers working within those arrangements. MACRA is one step towards a nationwide value-based payment system and moves our country further away from the "fee-for-service" system.

As providers, the top three things to know about MACRA are:

1. MACRA only applies to physician practices and to Medicare Part B payments. MACRA does not apply to hospitals at this point in time.
2. MACRA's Value-Based Payment programs will begin performance evaluation in 2017 and begin payment changes in 2019. One of the most important elements to understand is MIPS.
  - Merit Based Incentive Payments System (MIPS)- measures provider performance and pays based on:
    - Quality;
    - Resource Use;
    - Clinical Practice Improvement; and
    - Advancing Care Information (formerly Meaningful Use)
3. MACRA will streamline the number of (quality, resource use, improvement, and advancing care information) measures used to evaluate performance.

The MaineHealth ACO will continue to bring you updated information on MACRA and other pertinent issues in this regular newsletter. For more information about MACRA, please visit the links below:

**MACRA Quality Payment Program Fact sheet**

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Value-Based-Programs/MACRA-MIPS-and-APMs/NPRM-QPP-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

**MACRA / MIPS / APM Time Line**

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Value-Based-Programs/MACRA-MIPS-and-APMs/Timeline.PDF>