



Quick Guide to Understanding MACRA

This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:
[What every healthcare provider should know about MACRA](#)

The 2,400 page MACRA ruling may feel overwhelming for healthcare providers looking to brush up on the law before it's fully implemented in 2019. That's why it's important to start somewhere with an overview.

Here are the five key points of MACRA that will be most important to know starting out.

1. Smaller practices will feel the biggest pains of transition

The reimbursement scores of MACRA center around quality, advancing care information, clinical practice improvement activities, and resource use.

The metrics for these categories will zero in on providers focused on population health and coordinated care, so larger hospitals and practices will experience significant positive adjustments in their reimbursement rates.

Unfortunately, small and rural practices like chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, and behavioral health providers stand to lose the most because they tend to operate in isolation.

2. Care coordination and shared decision making will be impacted

Practices will need to know how to coordinate care and make healthcare decisions in accordance with MACRA to fully benefit from the program and avoid penalties.

Under the new payment models, the physician will be just one part of the care team. The team may also include a nurse, a pharmacist, and a social worker, in certain situations.

The proposed rule will move beyond this style of care and provide for community partnerships in helping to care for patients.

3. The Meaningful Use (MU) program will be encompassed by MIPS

The MU will still be in effect, but under MACRA it will change from focusing on EMR use into an expanded usage of electronic health systems to interact with patients and give them more access to their information.

Providers will still need to protect medical records from outside intrusion and HIPAA will also remain in place. But electronic access (and protection) will become much more of a focus as healthcare information will be shared within teams.

4. MACRA will impact physical therapists, nurse midwives, and clinical psychologists

Chiropractors, dentists, and optometrists will be affected by the proposed rule, as will nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical psychologists and social workers, physical and

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occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, dietitians, nutritionists, and nurse midwives.

These are professionals who we don't normally associate with these types of programs, but CMS rules and regulations will be concerned with Medicaid patients, not just on those who accept Medicare.

5. Early preparation will be key to success

All areas of the payment system are likely to be affected, as well as things like Electronic Healthcare Records/Electronic Medical Records (EHR/EMR) and the way teams are structured. It will also impact the way Medicare beneficiaries receive care, and they may need to understand what these changes mean for them and their coverage.

To participate in this new program successfully, it will require considerable ramp up time, which means physicians will need to be proactive in understanding and implementing new MACRA rules