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2019 Issue Brief Improving Medicare Advantage

Issue

Today, more than 33% of all Medicare beneficiaries have enrolled in MA plans, and our members care for a large number of these patients. MA plans are a financing model, which focuses on preventative care and value. This aligns with the medical group delivery model, resulting in improved care at a reduced cost. The payment structure utilized by MA incentivizes the team-based, multispecialty medical group approach, resulting in providing the right care at the right time. Congress should carefully consider any MA policy changes to ensure that they do not lead to decreased beneficiary access.

Furthermore, AMGA recommends Congress consider the following policies to further improve the MA program and AMGA members' ability to offer Medicare beneficiaries superior care:

Avoid any future cuts to MA rates: Consider the impact of any potential cuts, such as decreased beneficiary access, as well as decreased care coordination and care management for the chronically ill. Continue to use MA as another tool to incentivize the transformation to coordinated, integrated healthcare delivery that rewards value over volume.

Eliminate the Benchmark Cap for high quality MA plans: Under current law, MA plans in certain counties that demonstrate quality under the Medicare Star Rating System are not eligible for bonus payments that can be used for offering additional supplemental benefits or reducing beneficiary cost sharing. Congress should remove the caps for 4+ Star rated MA plans.

Correct the Coding Intensity Adjustment: Congress should work with stakeholders to develop an alternative approach that mitigates year-to-year variation in documentation and decrease the differences in MA and fee-for-service coding intensity.

Promote Plan Design Innovation and Flexibility: MA plans have the potential to address unmet social support needs, such as nutrition services and transportation, that fee-for service Medicare does not cover. We encourage Congress to promote flexibility within the MA program, to allow providers to improve care through supplemental benefits.