

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Questions and Answers  
Hospital Open Door Forum  
Tuesday, November 12, 2024

1. Question: Just want to clarify the wage index issue that was discussed by several of the speakers today. Inpatient uses Table 2 wage indexes, and column F would have the 5% cap applied, and column G would have the transition amount that the IFC is covering, correct?
  - a. Answer: Correct
    - i. Question: For outpatient, they've always matched up, they've always aligned. Now I'm hearing that they will not, in the cases of the facilities that would be in that transitional category.
      1. Answer: On the inpatient side, anybody, the difference between the two policies is that one is getting 95% of the wage index in the prior year, and that's if you're not a low wage hospital, and your wage index decreases by 5% or more, that goes into the cap budget neutrality. And if you're a low wage hospital, then you get that 95% of the prior year. But we're not budget neutralizing that increase of payment. So not speaking for outpatient, but it seems the wage index that we're applying in either of those columns probably would be used in outpatient. Just it's a different way of getting there.
        - a. Comment from participant: The transition amount that was added on the inpatient in column G, would it still be up, so inpatient and outpatient are going to have the same values for any given facility.
          - i. Comment from CMS: I think the values would probably be the same, but again, the definition of what that value is different on each side of the payment system. On the inpatient side, it's a transitional payment. On the outpatient side, it is still the low wage policy.

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