The committee met three times throughout the year via conference call. The charge of the Insurance Issues Committee is to monitor and address all insurance issues, both government and commercial, affecting physicians, practices and patients in Tennessee. This includes reimbursement, regulation and policy changes, lawsuit settlements, contracting issues, networks, pay for performance, workers compensation, etc.

**Palmetto**

Physicians continued to have delays with credentialing issues during the Cahaba/Palmetto transition. TMA President, Matthew Mancini, TMA CEO, Russ Miller and TMA Director of Insurance Affairs, Karen Baird had a conference call with Teresa Newton, Director of Provider Customer Service, Susan Pendley, Director of Provider Customer Service and other Palmetto leadership on October 4, 2018. They were informed that the transition was near completion and normal processing should resume. Karen Baird has established bi-weekly calls that include credentialing, claims, and provider customer service management. These calls have been effective in resolving most miscellaneous issues; however, there are still ongoing problems that continue to be addressed.

**Tennessee Healthcare Innovations Initiative**

TennCare announced May 30, 2018, that they were pausing the design of future episodes in order to dedicate more resources toward maintaining and improving the 48 existing episodes. Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) did not meet in the fall.

The following episodes were paused:

- The 20 episodes in waves 10 and 11 that have not been designed
- The five episodes with incomplete design due to data issues- Neonatal 31 weeks or less, Neonatal 32 to 36 weeks, Neonatal 36 weeks or more, Mastectomy, and Breast Cancer Medical Oncology
- Anxiety and Non-Emergent Depression episodes have been removed from the episodes program.

Yarnell Beatty and Karen Baird met with Senator Bo Watson, Brooks Daverman, and Jessica Schwartz from the State, several OB/GYN physicians and their practice managers from the Chattanooga area on August 21, 2018, regarding exorbitant penalties from the Perinatal Episodes of Care. Issues out of the quarterback’s control were discussed as well as Chattanooga being at a geographical disadvantage.
Misty Hickman, from the OB/GYN Centre of Excellence in Chattanooga, testified before the House TennCare Subcommittee on March 20, 2019.

The next annual feedback session is scheduled for May 21, 2019.

**TennCare Oversight**

The committee has discussed the possible development of a TennCare oversight committee. Several caption bills have been filed this session related to this issue. TMA met with Deputy Speaker of the House, Representative Matthew Hill, who is intent on regaining oversight and getting answers from the TennCare Bureau. (SB 387)

**Resolution No. 03-18**

Student Delegate, Glenn Harris, proposed a study of waiver 1332 of the ACA. This waiver would basically be insurance for the insurance companies when they experience higher than expected costs. Karen Baird contacted the major carriers who stated they had no current plans to apply for the waiver. TMA felt there was not enough data available to pursue this further at the present time.

**Humana**

Humana has not responded to TMA’s multiple requests for quarterly meetings. They no longer have field representatives; however, Karen Baird has established a contact person for individual issues. TMA has not had a large volume of Humana complaints and will not pursue quarterly meetings.

**Coverage for Alternative Treatment Options**

The committee expressed concerns regarding coverage for alternative treatment options for patients with chronic pain. TMA’s paralegal, Becky Morrissey, provided extensive research regarding major carrier policies related to alternative treatment modalities. There is still concern that although treatment is covered by TennCare, it may not get approved even when coverage criteria are met. Karen Baird has reached out to TennCare regarding this issue and will report back to the committee when information becomes available.

**CMS E & M Fee Schedule**

A letter was written to CMS Administrator Seema Verma opposing the proposed 2019 fee schedule related to the patients over paperwork initiative. CMS issued its final rule on November 1, 2018. Beginning January 1, 2021, CMS will implement single payment for Evaluation and Management office/outpatient visits levels two through four. The rate will be an average level of 3.6 and physicians will only be required to document to a level two. It will maintain the payment rate for level five to account for the care and needs of complex patients. Time may also be used if documented properly.
Quarterly Data Verification

CMS and commercial carriers require data verification every 90 days. This is administratively burdensome, especially for larger practices. Karen Baird is working with the payers to see if they can utilize CAQH for these updates.

NAMAS

TMA hosted an Evaluation and Management Boot Camp in January 2019. Shannon DeConda, Founder and President of the National Alliance for Medical Auditing Specialists (NAMAS) educated over 30 people during this two-day event. Some attendees took the Certified Evaluation and Management Auditor exam. Another Boot Camp is scheduled for October in Chattanooga.

Tennessee Healthcare Symposium

The TMA Annual Insurance Workshops have been restructured and will be now be called the Tennessee Healthcare Symposium. This is a collaborative event with the major payers to include a keynote speaker and break-out sessions. Multiple vendors and carrier provider support services will also be available. Locations will be Memphis, Nashville Area, Knoxville, and Chattanooga.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Leonard, MD, Chair

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