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MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES WITH MULTIPLE OUTPATIENT CLAIMS: 2007

Highlights

- 90% of the beneficiaries with an outpatient claim in 2007 had more than one such claim. Most (73%) had between 1-10 claims, but 5% had more than 25 claims. The maximum number of outpatient claims for a single beneficiary in 2007 was 192 claims.
- Beneficiaries who were eligible for Medicare through disability (under age 65) were more likely to have a large number of outpatient claims than those eligible through age (over age 65). Beneficiaries eligible for Medicare through ESRD (any age) were also significantly more likely to have multiple claims.
- Beneficiaries with at least one chronic condition diagnosis were over three times more likely to have multiple outpatient claims in 2007 than those with no chronic condition diagnoses.

Introduction

The Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care (VPQHC) has obtained comprehensive Medicare data for Vermonters in 2007. This data include Part A and Part B information as well as durable medical equipment and assessment files (files that contain the functional and health status of beneficiaries). All files are linked by a unique and anonymous beneficiary identification code.

This is the second in a series of reports characterizing Medicare beneficiaries with outpatient claims in 2007. The first report summarized the characteristics of the beneficiary population with at least one outpatient claim. This report explores those beneficiaries with multiple outpatient claims in 2007. Information with regard to age, gender, Medicare eligibility, and chronic illness is presented.

For the purposes of this report, outpatient services are defined by Medicare Part B claims. The Medicare Part B claims data include all Part B claims in 2007. This report also makes use of the Beneficiary Summary File and Chronic Illness Summary File. These datasets provides demographic information and chronic illness status for each beneficiary included in the 2007 Medicare data files.

About Medicare

Medicare is the government health insurance program administered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Medicare is the largest health insurance service in the country, with around 40 million Americans participating. Individuals are typically eligible for Medicare services if they meet one of the following requirements: are 65 years of age or older, are less than 65 years of age but have certain disabilities, or have End-Stage Renal Disease (kidney failure that requires a transplant or dialysis).



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Findings

Of the 87,330 beneficiaries with a claim for outpatient services in 2007, 90% had more than one such claim. Most of the beneficiaries (73%) had between one and ten claims for outpatient services in 2007, but 5% beneficiaries had over 25 claims. The maximum number of claims in 2007 was 192 claims. Table 1 in the Appendix shows the number and percentage of beneficiaries with multiple claims for outpatient services in 2007.

Gender & Age

In the population with at least one outpatient claim, females were significantly more likely to have multiple claims than males. 92% of females with an outpatient claim had more than one such claim, versus only 88% of males. This gender disparity lessened as the number of multiple claims increased. There was not a significant difference in gender between patients with 25 or more outpatient claims in 2007.

Of beneficiaries with at least one outpatient claim, those over age 65 were significantly more likely to have two or three claims than those under age 65. However, beneficiaries under age 65 were significantly more likely to have more than five claims. This implies that beneficiaries who were eligible for Medicare because of disability (under age 65) were more likely to have a large number of outpatient claims than those eligible because of age.

Medicare Status

The number of outpatient claims was highly dependent on the reason for beneficiary eligibility for Medicare (Medicare status). Table 2 shows the percentage of beneficiaries with more than 1 claim and more than 10 claims in 2007 by Medicare status. In particular, beneficiaries who were entitled to Medicare coverage because of end stage renal disease (ESRD) were considerably more likely to have multiple outpatient claims in 2007. This is particularly evident in the percentage of beneficiaries with more than 10 outpatient claims. 91% of elderly beneficiaries with ESRD had more than 10 outpatient claims versus only 28% of elderly patients without ESRD.

Chronic Conditions

Of the 87,330 beneficiaries with at least one outpatient claim, 68,707 (79%) had a least one chronic condition diagnosis in 2007. Beneficiaries with at least one chronic condition were over three times more likely to have more than one outpatient claim in 2007 (94% vs. 79%). Table 3 shows a comparison of the percentage of beneficiaries with and without a chronic condition diagnosis for increasing numbers of outpatient claims in 2007. At all levels, beneficiaries with at least one chronic condition were significantly more likely to have multiple outpatient claims.



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The most common chronic condition diagnoses were similar for patients with only one outpatient claim in 2007 versus patients with multiple outpatient claims. The most common chronic condition diagnosis in both groups was for ischemic heart disease. Diabetes, cataracts, glaucoma, chronic arthritis, and congestive heart failure were also common diagnoses between those with and without multiple outpatient claims in 2007. Figure 1 summarizes the chronic condition diagnoses for beneficiaries with only one outpatient claim and beneficiaries with more than 10 outpatient claims in 2007.



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Appendix

Table 1: Count and percentage of multiple claims for an outpatient service, 2007

Number of outpatient claims in 2007	Count of beneficiaries (N=87,330)	Percent of beneficiaries with outpatient claim
1-10	63,385	73%
11-20	16,279	19%
21-30	4,506	5%
31-40	1,396	2%
41-50	463	1%
51-60	176	<1%
61-70	72	<1%
71-80	33	<1%
81-90	10	<1%
91-100	2	<1%
101+	5	<1%

Table 2: Multiple claims by Medicare status for patient with at least one outpatient claim

Medicare Status	% with more than 1 outpatient claim	% with more than 10 outpatient claims
Aged without ESRD (n=72,940)	91%	28%
Aged with ESRD (n=274)	99%	91%
Disabled without ESRD (n=13,803)	89%	32%
Disabled with ESRD (n=158)	97%	90%
ESRD only (n=133)	97%	64%

Table 3: Comparison of beneficiaries with and without a chronic condition diagnosis

Number of claims	Beneficiaries with no chronic conditions (n=18,623)	Beneficiaries with at least one chronic condition (n=68,707)
More than one outpatient claim	79%	94% *
More than five outpatient claims	30%	63% *
More than 10 outpatient claims	10%	35% *
More than 25 outpatient claims	1%	7% *

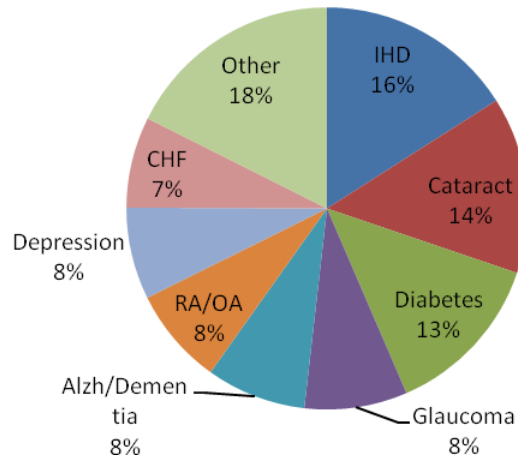
* Significantly different from beneficiaries with no chronic conditions at p=0.05



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Beneficiaries with only one outpatient claim in 2007



Beneficiaries with more than ten outpatient claims in 2007

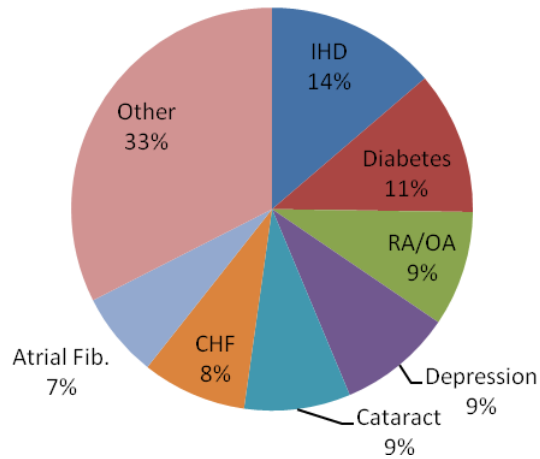


Figure 1: Chronic condition diagnoses for beneficiaries with/without multiple outpatient claims, 2007