MedCAC Recommended
Top 100 Medicare Research Priorities

On October 22, 2007 CMS convened a public meeting of the Medicare Evidence Development & Coverage Advisory Committee (MedCAC) entitled *Evidentiary Priorities for the Medicare Program.* The purpose of this MedCAC was provide CMS with prioritized research topics that could best fill evidentiary gaps for issues of critical importance to the Medicare program and the Medicare population. These issues will provide a framework for the scientific community in developing evidence that will directly affect coverage and impact the health of Medicare beneficiaries.

During the meeting, scientists from the National Heart Lung, and Blood Institute, the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, the National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive, and Kidney Diseases, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke provided the MedCAC panel with the most important evidence gaps from their Institute's perspective.

Based on this input, the MedCAC panel created a list of more than 100 research issues for the Medicare population and rated the importance of each topic on a scale of 1 (lowest priority) to 5 (highest priority). Scores were averaged. The table presents the research issues with averages of the panel members' scores. The top 20 issues are starred.

Group	Research Issue	Average score (* indicates top 20)
Cancer	Appropriate ESA use in cancer patients	4.4*
	Benefit of cancer prognostic markers: OncoDX, Her-2-Neu	4.0*
	Benefits of high cost cancer drugs	4.0*
	New radiation treatments for cancer: IMRT, proton beam	4.0*
	Late effects of cancer treatments	3.2
	Fecal DNA testing as screening	3.1
	CT lung cancer screening	3.1
	Benefits of CT colonography	2.9
CV	Treatment of atrial fibrillation	4.1*
	Does screening for atherosclerotic disease improve outcomes?	3.9*
	Effectives of CT angiography	3.8*
	CHF prevention	3.7*
	Vascular disease imaging. What does it add?	3.7
	Long term safety of drug eluting stents	3.6
	Use of drug eluting stents for severe vascular disease	3.6
	Long term use of antiplatelets following drug eluting stents	3.4
	Diastolic heart failure	3.4
	Cardiovascular treatment effects in women	3.3
	Control of blood pressure in specific subgroups	3.2
	Plavix for peripheral artery disease	3.1
	Does vascular disease imaging drive practice?	2.6

Diabetes	Benefit of early aggressive treatment for diabetes	4.0*
	Comparative effectiveness of all diabetes treatments using hard outcomes	3.9*
	Benefit of weight loss medication on diabetes	3.9*
	Optimal hemoglobin A1c goals in elderly	3.8*
	Impact/timing of bariatric surgery in diabetes	3.7
	Identifying diabetes at early stages	3.6
	Optimizing behavioral therapy for diabetes	3.5
	Benefits of self glucose monitoring in elderly	3.5
	Benefits of improving BP and lipid control on diabetes	3.4
Drug	Genetic testing to reduce adverse drug events	3.8
	New anticoagulants	3.5
	Are ESAs beneficial in the treatment of unexplained anemia in elderly?	3.1
	ESA use in all patient groups	2.9
	Enhancing adherence to polypharmacy	2.9
	Genetic testing for warfarin sensitivity	2.8
HEM	Home International Normalized Ratio monitoring for warfarin	3.1
	Storage time for blood	2.5
Mental	Improving depression care in primary office care	3.8*
	Benefits of antidepressants in elderly	3.6
	Improving screening for depression	3.4
	Appropriate sequence of psychotropics	3.4
	Does treating depression improve outcomes of other chronic illnesses?	3.3
	Impact of antipsychotic medications on physical/mental problems	3.2
	Paying for psychiatric care manager time	3.2
	Role of physician extenders	3.1
	Benefit of psychotherapy in elderly	3.0
	Financial model to optimize depression care	2.6
MISC	Appropriate use of hospice care	4.1*
	Appropriate end-of-life care	3.8*
	Enrollment in clinical trials	3.4
	Effect of smoking cessation counseling on Medicare population	3.2
	Total body cooling in sudden death	2.4
NEURO	Comparative effectiveness of treatment of carotid artery disease	4.2*
	Comparative effectiveness of treatment of acute stroke treatment: clot retrieval vs. reperfusion drugs	4.0*
	Comparative effectiveness of treatment of intracranial disease	3.8*
	Diagnosis and treatment of TIA	3.6
	Benefits of advanced imaging for acute stroke to identify who best benefits from intervention	3.5
	Does occupational, physical, and speech slow deterioration in neurodegenerative diseases?	3.4
	Does post acute stroke rehabilitation decrease falls, readmissions, and SNF placement?	3.2
	Does change in coverage of fall prevention services decrease falls?	3.1
	Does structured exercise program improve mobility-related ADLs?	3.1
	Treatment of patent foramen ovale post stroke	3.1
	Treatment of berry aneurysm	2.9
	Imaging in the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease	2.8

	Comparative effectiveness of treatment of early surgery vs. medical treatment for epilepsy	2.7
	Benefit of early positive pressure ventilation in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis	2.7
	Neuroimaging in headaches	2.6
	Discontinuing anticonvulsants in epilepsy	2.4
	Management of medication use/overuse in headaches	2.3
ORTHO	Treatment of back pain	3.6
	Optimize rehabilitation after treatment of hip fracture	3.4
	Treatment of osteoporosis	3.3
	Optimal screening time for osteoporosis with bone density testing	3.3
	Markers of fracture risk in osteoporosis	3.3
	Better specificity of diagnosis of back pain	3.3
	Comparative effectiveness of bone density testing	3.1
	Bone morphogenetic protein in fracture healing in osteoporosis	3.1
	Treatment of pain of osteoarthritis	3.1
	Better joint replacements	3.1
	Effective treatment of osteoporosis in subgroups	2.9
	Source of pain in osteoarthritis	2.9
	Benefit of intra-articular drugs in osteoarthritis	2.9
	Optimal vitamin D & calcium dosing	2.9
	Basic science of effect of various treatments on cartilage in osteoarthritis	2.9
	Effect of exercise and weight loss on osteoarthritis	2.9
	Benefit of oral glucosamine/chrondritin in osteoarthritis	2.7
	Best bone density testing for men	2.6
PREV	Increasing utilization of low cost effective treatments such as aspirin and flu shots	3.1
RA	Rheumatoid arthritis treatment	3.3
	Immunomodulating drugs	2.6
RESP	Benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation	2.7
	Long term oxygen use in COPD in patients with higher PaO_2	2.6
URO	Reducing cardiovascular disease in patients with ESRD	3.6
	Treatments to slow progression of chronic kidney disease	3.4
	Early placement of vascular access for dialysis	3.3
	Optimal timing for initiation of dialysis	3.1
	Surgery for female incontinence	3.1
	Urodynamics for incontinence	2.9
	Urological therapy in spinal cord patients: intermittent vs. indwelling catheters	2.9
	Medical vs. minimally invasive therapy for BPH	2.8
	Pre-transplant evaluation of cardiovascular disease	2.6
WOUND	Comparative effectiveness of treatment for ulcers: off-loading, debridement, biologics, revascularization	4.2*
	Identification of high risk for ulcers	3.1
	Prevention of foot ulcers with therapeutic shoes and socks	3.0