

The April 2 New York Times article, “Finding a Doctor Who Accepts Medicare Isn’t Easy,” contained an error related to MedPAC’s research findings when it was initially published. The article read:

“In a June 2008 report, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, an independent federal panel that advises Congress on Medicare, said that 29 percent of the Medicare beneficiaries it surveyed had a problem finding a primary care doctor or specialist to treat them, up from 24 percent the year before.”

The sentence was incorrect for the following reasons:

- 1) It significantly overstated the number of beneficiaries that MedPAC reported having access problems. In 2008, about 6% of beneficiaries were looking for a new primary care physician and of those, 28% were having trouble finding a new primary care physician.
- 2) This finding only applies to primary care physicians; the same is not true for specialists.

The findings were published on page 89 of our March Report to Congress:
http://www.medpac.gov/chapters/Mar09_Ch02B.pdf.

A correct statement would read: “Among the small share of beneficiaries (6%) looking for a new primary care physician in 2008, 28% reported problems finding one, up from 24% in 2006. The number of beneficiaries reporting problems finding a new primary care physician amounts to less than 2% of the total Medicare population.”

In response to MedPAC’s request, the New York Times revised the article and published a correction.