

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER'S
PROGRAM IN ETHICS IN SCIENCE AND MEDICINE INVITES YOU TO ATTEND:

ETHICS GRAND ROUNDS

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 – Noon-1:00 p.m. (Central Time)

PROFIT OVER PROFESSIONALISM: THE CASE OF THE MEDICARE PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) sets fees for 8000+ service codes that comprise the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule based largely on recommendations by the American Medical Association's Relative Value Update Committee (RUC) through notice-and-comment rulemaking. Under RUC supervision, medical specialty societies and other professional organizations ask members to estimate clinical time and "work" for codes. The RUC process eschews reliance on empirical data but rather relies almost entirely on the estimates from the surveys.

Various ethical concerns about this process have arisen: physicians completing the survey may have biased judgments because they and their specialty colleagues directly benefit financially from their judgments and therefore inflate time and work estimates; some physicians describing the actual clinical activities comprising work to inform RUC members from other specialties exaggerate or invent work that they do not actually perform; and the AMA/RUC routinely misrepresents the performance of the RUC in determining accurate RVUs, while keeping much of their work protected from public scrutiny.

This presentation describes the fee-setting process and elaborates on the ethical concerns that result in distorted fees, which in turn negatively affects access, quality, and spending for Medicare beneficiaries and the public at large.

This live lecture will be presented virtually.

John Z. Sadler, M.D., Course Director
Program in Ethics in Science & Medicine

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Target Audience: Physicians, faculty, fellows, residents, trainees, students, health care professionals. **Educational Objectives:** At the conclusion of this activity, the participant should be able to: 1) Recognize perennial and emerging bioethical problems in clinical practice, research, public health, and health policy arenas. 2) Describe competing/contrasting viewpoints concerning these bioethical problems. 3) Demonstrate increased skills in analyzing and practically handling bioethical problems in the clinical, research, public health, and health policy arenas. **Educational Method:** Lecture and question-and-answer period. **Accreditation:** The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians. **Credit Designation:** The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center designates this live activity for a maximum of **1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)**[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center designates this activity for **1 hour(s)** in medical ethics and/or professional responsibility. **Relevant Financial Relationships:** In accordance with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accrediting Continuing Education, all persons in the position to control the content of an education activity are required to disclose all financial relationships in any amount occurring within the past 24 months with any ineligible company (any entity whose primary business is producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on patients). UT Southwestern also considers ineligible those companies producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products in development for future use on patients, such as healthcare product research companies. All reported financial relationships with ineligible companies are reviewed for relevancy and then mitigated through a content review process prior to the activity (where applicable).

NCPD: UT Southwestern Medical Center is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. This activity has been awarded 1.0 contact hour.