The Critical Role of Neurologists in Our Health Care System

Preserving Our Patients' Access to Care

The American Academy of Neurology—the world’s largest professional association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals with more than 30,000 members—is dedicated to excellence in patient-centered neurologic care through education, advocacy, and research. One of the main goals of the AAN is to ensure patient access to the right care. Learn more at AAN.com

REFERENCES
A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating, and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system.

### Patient Care
Neurologists treat individuals with complicated and expensive diseases. In the United States:
- 75% of stroke patients were seen by a neurologist.
- 73% of MS patients were seen by a neurologist.
- 55% of Parkinson’s patients were seen by a neurologist.

### Components of Neurology
- Primary Care
- Long-term Disease Management
- Care Coordination
- Complex Chronic Care
- Diagnose Neurologic Conditions

### Neurologists Provide Cognitive Care
- Cognitive care specialists are physicians with additional training in a specific field of medicine who primarily provide face-to-face care, also known as evaluation and management (E/M) services, to people, from pediatric to geriatric, with complex medical conditions.
- These conditions require a level of expertise which the referring physician—typically the primary care provider—is not trained to provide.
- Cognitive care services are generally captured using higher level E/M services needed to diagnose and manage complex and usually chronic conditions.
- The median neurologist received nearly 75% of their payments from E/M.

### Policy Considerations
- Payers should recognize the value of spending time with patients in talking with, diagnosing, and managing their conditions as the intensity of cognitive work is equal to the intensity associated with performing diagnostic or other procedures.
- Neurology should be prioritized as a high-value medical profession in order to decrease workforce shortages.
- Policies aimed at physicians who coordinate care over a lifetime (e.g., primary care) should include neurologists as the principal providers of care for the complex, progressive diseases of the brain and central nervous system.
- Health care reform efforts should prioritize management and coordination of chronic care patients.

### Workforce Shortage
The higher prevalence of neurologic conditions, the aging of the US population, and a greater number of patients gaining access to the health care coverage will increase the shortfall of neurologists to 19% by 2025.
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