What’s Your Value?
RVUs and How to Market to Potential Employers

Jacob Wynes DPM, MS
Instructor of Orthopaedics
University of Maryland School of Medicine
Topics Covered Today

- Understanding the “Work RVU”
- How wRVU is used to rate YOUR productivity
- How to calculate wRVU values based on Medicare
- wRVU incentive structures
- MGMA based wRVU values
- Private Practice vs. Hospital Based Compensation
- Case examples
- Highlights for Negotiation Purposes
History of RVU
Relative Value Unit

- Relative Value Unit:
  - wRVU ~ 50-53% of total RVU
  - peRVU ~ (practice expense) ~ 45% of total RVU
  - mpRVU (mal practice) ~ 5% of total RVU

- Payment for service based on RVU (combining resources and cost attributed to physician service)

- Based on 1988 CMS study with introduction of Resource Based Relative Value Scale (RBRVS) and tied to CPT structure

- Expenses of the physician practice, professional liability insurance, overall physician work / professional component

- Medicare determines $$$ amount by a conversion factor (regardless of specialty)

- Adjusted for geographic differences
  - Geographic practice index
RVU values can change

- Based on a committee / editorial panel comprised of ~ 29 members and the Relative Value Scale Update Committee (RUC) make recommendations to CMS

- Committee primarily involved in the (w) work component of the RVU vs. the (PEAC) practice expense component of the RVU

- CMS introduced the Budget Neutrality Work Adjuster (BNWA) which lowers work RVU for any proposed increase in overall RVU reimbursement

  - **Meaning** less compensation for each wRVU to avoid overpayment for the same “amount of work”
Work RVUs ("Your Productivity")

- Based on Common Procedural Terminology (CPT) as well as E/M codes
- Designed to rate physician productivity
- \((W) = \text{work or "physician effort"}\)

**Components:**
- Facility / Geography
- Global
- Provider
- Complexity
Growth of wRVU Compensation

- 2007 MGMA reported 16% of group practices used a wRVU compensation formula
- 2010 MGMA report noted wRVU based compensation rising to 35%
- 2011 Merrit Hawkins Review of Physician Recruiting Incentives
  - 52% of searches feature salary plus production bonus based on wRVU
  - [www.merritthawkins.com](http://www.merritthawkins.com)
- wRVU model exceeding net collections for productivity measurement
  - Dobosenski et al. Group Practice Journal 2105
The wRVU
Uses in Practice Management

- Consideration of cost of services per unit
- Operating margin determined: average collected revenue per RVU
- Evaluation of productivity and identification of trends
Key Limitations of RVUs

- Not meant to provide adjustments for risks associated with case complexity or prognosis
- Not a measure of “collections” / “real money” coming into a practice
- Does not take into account billing / office issues
- Does not consider QUALITY OF CARE and no determination of practitioner EFFICIENCY
- Low producers have been shown to have the highest wRVU
  - Hyden et al. How to measure physician compensation per RVU. MGMA 2013.
Influence of Medicare


- Federal government determination of what the provider should get credit for
  - Based on the calendar year
  - Lower RVUs are reimbursed lower

- The Medicare Fee Schedule is based off of the wRVU and conversion factors

- Medicare does **not** differentiate DPM/DO/MD provider when comparing RVUs or wRVUs

- Modifiers can impact wRVU compensation
Physician Fee Schedule Search

Search Criteria

Begin your search below by selecting search criteria. Additional search criteria will appear depending on which selections you choose. Once your selections are complete, you will be asked to submit your criteria. All search criteria options displayed on this page are required.

Please select a year (see 'Notes for Selected Year' box for details):

2016

Type of Information:
- Pricing Information
- Payment Policy Indicators
- Relative Value Units
- Geographic Practice Cost Index
- All

Select Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Criteria:
- Single HCPCS Code
- List of HCPCS Codes
- Range of HCPCS Codes

Select Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) Option:
- National Payment Amount
- Specific MAC
- Specific Locality
- All MACs

NOTES FOR SELECTED YEAR

2016: The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) repealed the Medicare sustainable growth rate (SGR) update formula for payments under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. For 2016, the Physician Fee Schedule update factor is 0.5% and the conversion factor is 35.8043.

PFS UPDATE STATUS

Data last updated: 04/04/2016
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11044</td>
<td>Deb bone 20 sq cm/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some Terms You Should Know

- **Gross charges**: full fee schedule of the practice (% of Medicare established by the practice)

- **Net charges**: all charges are adjusted; typically amount collected

- **Gross collections**: prior to refunds for overpayment or errors

- **Net receipts**: calculated after refunds or adjustments
Practice Incentive Compensation

- Varies from institution to institution

- **Two Scenarios:**
  - wRVU “goal” established at time of hiring
  - wRVU “goal” is **NOT** established at time of hiring

- wRVU may be used as a measure of physician clinical activity and “complexity” of work performed

- **Profit / Loss (P&L Reports)**

- Typically, at month’s end, E/M and CPT submitted to outside company and “scrubbed” for conversion to wRVU then compared to charges submitted
Quarterly Reporting

FIGURE 3-1  Data Charted on Quarterly Basis Example

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wRVU & Physician Compensation
Private Practice

- **Bottom Line Allocation:** overhead subtracted from collections (creating a “pool of money”)
  - 10% to future growth of the practice
  - Remaining amount allocated to providers based on wRVU
  - 75% based on individual productivity and remaining 25% allocated equally

- **Revenue / Expense:** All collections distributed based on “set criteria”
Total practice revenue: $6.3 million (divided by 7 practitioners = $135,000)
Practice Expenses: $2.5 million
Profit before physician expenses: $3.8 million

**Revenue**
Productivity:
$6.3 million x 85% x wRVU

**Expense**
Productivity:
2.5 million x 60% x wRVU

Revenue - Expense = **Compensation**

15% Revenue allotted equally / 85% wRVU; Expenses allotted 60% equal / 40% wRVU
Physicians A and F have the highest wRVU in the group and will receive higher compensation
wRVU & Physician Compensation

Hospital - Based Practice

- Profit is less achievable
- Worse payer mix
- **Basic wRVU Model:** wRVU multiplied by conversion factor = cash compensation
- Hospital use of industry benchmarks
- wRVU thresholds are established
- Guaranteed compensation (base pay) is set artificially low to allow for incentives
The Reality
Tiered wRVU Model of Physician Compensation

Hospital - Based

- Once fixed cost is covered, additional income is available which can be shared with physician

- More productivity allows for a higher conversion factor (an area for negotiation)

- Varies from institution to institution (2-5+ tiers are possible)
### TABLE 4-5 Basic wRVU Model with Guaranteed Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario One</th>
<th>Scenario Two</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base Compensation</strong></td>
<td><strong>$125,000</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>wRVU Threshold</strong></td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conversion Factor</strong></td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>wRVUs Produced</strong></td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wRVU Compensation</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,625</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Compensation</strong></td>
<td><strong>$140,625</strong></td>
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### TABLE 4-6 Tiered wRVU Model

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Tier</th>
<th>Low End of Range</th>
<th>High End of Range</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>One</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td>3,750</td>
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<td>Two</td>
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<td>4,500</td>
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<td>Three</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>7,500</td>
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</table>

### TABLE 4-7 Example of Tiered wRVU Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
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<th>Conversion Factor</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
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<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td>$37.00</td>
<td>$138,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>$46.00</td>
<td>$46,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>$49.00</td>
<td>$12,250</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$270,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pay Band wRVU Model of Physician Compensation

Hospital - Based

- **Ideally**: Calculated quarterly previous 12 months compared to industry benchmark (MGMA)
  - Ie. Performing at 45th percentile for past 12 months, his/her compensation should be paid at this level for the next 3 months and if productivity increases to 55th percentile, compensation would increase accordingly.

- Model completely based on level of productivity

- Can also be compared to the median compensation pattern

BASE COMPENSATION IS USUALLY LOWER IN THIS MODEL
RVU: Hospital Based vs. Private Practice

- **Private Office**
  - Physician compensation as a function of practice profitability
  - More income = increase revenue or decrease expense
  - **A problem**: services provided that generate sizable collections with low wRVU
    - Creates DIS-INCENTIVE for physician if productivity based on wRVU

- **Hospital-Based Practice**
  - More flexible (may deem losses acceptable)
  - More latitude in combining wRVU & collections as a measure of productivity
How a Practice *Should* View You

- Internal comparisons to other physicians
- **External comparisons to industry benchmarks (MGMA)**
  - Compare directly to a specific percentile
  - Calculate as a percentage of the median
- Ratio analysis using compensation
  - Compensation / \( \text{wRVU} \) = conversion factor
  - \$25 - \$75
- Ratio analysis using collections
  - Collections / \( \text{wRVU} \) = identification of trends
# Compensation to Productivity Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compensation/ Producivity Ratio</th>
<th># of group responses</th>
<th># of provider responses</th>
<th>25th percentile</th>
<th>75th percentile</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>25th percentile</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net collections</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
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<td>Work RVUs</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>$73.68</td>
<td>$59.42</td>
<td>$48.34</td>
<td>$58.78</td>
<td>$51.08</td>
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Conversion Factor

- **Determination**: National MEDIAN Compensation per specialty / # of work RVUs for that specialty
- This "Conversion Factor" acts as a "market rate" for doctors in that specialty
- Higher RVU cases impact compensation
  - A well patient visit has a lower RVU than an invasive surgical procedure
  - Surgeons doing more complex cases would accumulate more RVUs than a physician more low acuity patients per day
Medical Group Management Association (MGMA)

Carries a wide number of respondents

Breakdown geographically, demographically, and hospital size

Used to establish YOUR percentile rank amongst the profession
Anything besides MGMA?

http://www.mgma.com/industry-data/mgma-surveys-reports

- Sullivan, Cotter and Associates Physician Compensation and Productivity
  - https://www.sullivancotter.com/healthcare-compensation-surveys/purchase-surveys/

- American Medical Group Association Compensation and Financial Survey
## DPM Compensation Reported

**American Medical Group Association 2015**

**Compensation and Productivity Survey - Podiatry (Based on 2014 Data)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DPM compensation Reported</th>
<th># of Group Responses</th>
<th># of Provider Responses</th>
<th>90th Percentile</th>
<th>80th Percentile</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>20th Percentile</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>50 - 150</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>464,953</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>152</td>
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<td>East</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>392,878</td>
<td>330,000</td>
<td>226,257</td>
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<td>360,460</td>
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<td>170,000</td>
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<td>258,014</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>272,530</td>
<td>99,509</td>
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</table>
## DPM wRVUs Reported
### American Medical Group Association 2015

Compensation and Productivity Survey - Podiatry (Based on 2014 Data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># Grp Responses</th>
<th># Provider Responses</th>
<th>90th percentile</th>
<th>80th percentile</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>20th percentile</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>8,505</td>
<td>7,197</td>
<td>5,578</td>
<td>4,429</td>
<td>5,959</td>
<td>2,080</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 50</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>50-150</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8,337</td>
<td>6,999</td>
<td>5,655</td>
<td>4,732</td>
<td>6,047</td>
<td>1,873</td>
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<td>151-300</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>7,214</td>
<td>6,119</td>
<td>4,633</td>
<td>6,191</td>
<td>2,476</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<td>4,265</td>
<td>5,850</td>
<td>2,016</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9,132</td>
<td>7,544</td>
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<td>4,068</td>
<td>6,499</td>
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<td>7,297</td>
<td>6,244</td>
<td>4,555</td>
<td>6,518</td>
<td>2,527</td>
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<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8,541</td>
<td>7,086</td>
<td>5,645</td>
<td>4,474</td>
<td>5,834</td>
<td>1,973</td>
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Physician Acuity

- Part of the Physician Profile
- Trended by administration and compared to national peer statistics
- Measurement of physician consumption of resources for a specific procedure or service
- Acuity = \( \frac{\text{Total # of wRVU billed}}{\text{Total # of Encounters Billed}} \)
- Consider wRVUs generated per patient as a metric of productivity and complexity of procedures
Case #1: Wound Care Visit / Subsequent Encounter Debridement

- Time: 10 minutes
- CPT 97597
- 0.51 wRVU / 1.59 RVU

Other codes to consider
- Incision of bone cortex (28005: 9.44 wRVU), Local tissue rearrangement (14040: 8.6 wRVU), Bone biopsy (20245: 8.98 wRVU), Partial resection of bone (28122: 6.76 wRVU)
Case #2: Bunion / Hammertoe

- Time: **90 Minutes**

- **Lapidus**
  - CPT: 28740
  - wRVU 9.29 / 13.88 RVU

- **Weil osteotomy**
  - CPT: 28308
  - wRVU 5.48 / 10.27 RVU

- **MTPJ capsulotomy**
  - CPT: 28270
  - 4.93 wRVU / 8.79 RVU

- **PIPJ arthrodesis**
  - CPT: 28285
  - wRVU 5.62 / 9.29 RVU
Case #3: Pediatric Flatfoot Reconstruction

- **Time:** 120 minutes

- **Gastrocnemius recession**
  - CPT: 27687
  - wRVU 6.41 / 5.71 RVU

- **Cotton osteotomy**
  - CPT: 28304
  - wRVU 9.41 / 13.17 RVU

- **Evans osteotomy**
  - CPT 28300
  - wRVU 9.73 / 7.54 RVU

- **Medial calcaneal displacement osteotomy**
  - CPT 28300
  - wRVU 9.73 / 7.54 RVU
Case #4: Arthrogryposis / Clubfoot with multiple osteotomies and Taylor Spatial Frame Application

- **Time:** 4.5 hours + Office Encounters / Imaging / Adjustments

- **First MTPJ Fusion**
  - 28750 (8.57 wRVU / 13.73 RVU)

- **Tarsal Tunnel Release**
  - 28035 (5.23 wRVU / 9.35 RVU)

- **Medial calcaneal slide osteotomy**
  - 28300 (9.73 wRVU / 7.54 RVU)

- **Midfoot Gigli Osteotomy**
  - 28304 (9.41 wRVU / 13.17 RVU)

- **Application of Taylor Spatial Frame**
  - 20696 (17.56 wRVU / 13.75 RVU)
Summary: What the Administrators Think of…

- **wRVU**: physician work reflecting time, mental effort, judgment, technical skill, effort, and stress associated with patient care

- **Target RVU**: physician effort monthly correlated with work contract

- **New patient**: has not been seen in 3 years more new patients = practice is growing

- **Total Encounters**: treating the patient for a particular complaint (regardless of how long you spend with the patient)

- **Charges**: total gross charges billed to a 3rd party payer before adjustments

- **Accounts Receivable Balance**: gross amounts outstanding
  - New Balance at end of the month = balance of previous month - net payments - net adjustments for current month

- **Collection percentage**: % of gross charges being collected after all adjustments
Strategies for Negotiation

- For residents / fellows, determine wRVU per year of a successful practitioner who’s practice you can emulate based on your training and goals.

- For current practitioners, your worth is established by taking your productivity for the year and convert to wRVU and comparing to MGMA guidelines.

- Inquire about historic RVU data history for other Foot / Ankle providers in the practice.

- If limb salvage, wound care is part of your armamentarium, then use this to your advantage as a means of generating wRVU during established clinic visits (in addition to operating room productivity).

- Make sure to ask about what incentive structure is used and market appropriately.
Good Luck!

jwynes@umoa.umm.edu