

Impact of New CMS Rule

ACS Member Survey Results

September 2020



Goals

- Understand how the proposed CMS surgical cuts will have a negative impact on patient outcomes

Methodology

Survey Dates	September 8, 2020 – September 14, 2020
Data Collection	Online Survey
Audience	n=1,324 ACS Members

Key Findings

Finding

Implication

1.

Nearly One-in-Three Surgeons (31%) Expect to Reduce their Medicare Patient Intake: After learning about the rule, 31% of surgeons think they will take some action that will reduce their Medicare patient intake.

Surgeons who think they will reduce their Medicare patient intake will try to keep all existing Medicare patients and will do everything in their power to put patients first.

2.

The Rule Will Reduce Time Spent with Patients: When presented with a list of specific actions they may take in response to the rule, surgeons think they are most likely to reduce scheduling for Medicare patients as well as reduce the time spent with patients.

As a result of this rule, surgeons will be forced to spend less time with patients and reduce patients' access to quality care.

3.

Surgeons are Worried About Medicare and Non-Medicare Patients: Surgeons are concerned about the effect the rule will have on both Medicare and non-Medicare patients, with 37% believing a consequence of the rule will be decreased Medicare patients and 35% thinking that it will decrease non-Medicare pro-bono patients.

The rule will also have widespread implications on non-Medicare patients. The impact of the rule will be felt by all patients, not just those on Medicare.

4.

A Reduction in Office Staff is a Potential Consequence of the Rule: 40% of surgeons report they may be forced to hire fewer administrative staff, fewer new nurses, cut existing administrative staff, or cut existing nurses.

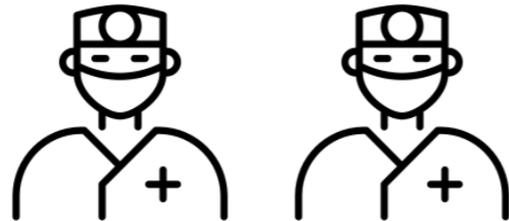
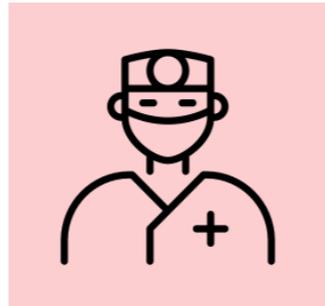
Reducing surgical office staff will only add to the job loss already felt due to COVID-19, putting further economic pressure on nurses and administrative staff.

Surgeons will have to accept fewer Medicare patients

Nearly one-in-three surgeons predict they will decrease their Medicare patient intake in response to the CMS rule; surgeons will do all they can to keep seeing existing Medicare patients

1-in-3 Surgeons Forced to Change Medicare Patient Intake

31% of Surgeons Will be Forced to Take on Fewer Medicare Patients



I will take on fewer new Medicare patients, and keep all existing Medicare patients

18%

I will take on no new Medicare patients and drop some existing Medicare patients

5%

I will take on no new Medicare patients, and keep all existing Medicare patients

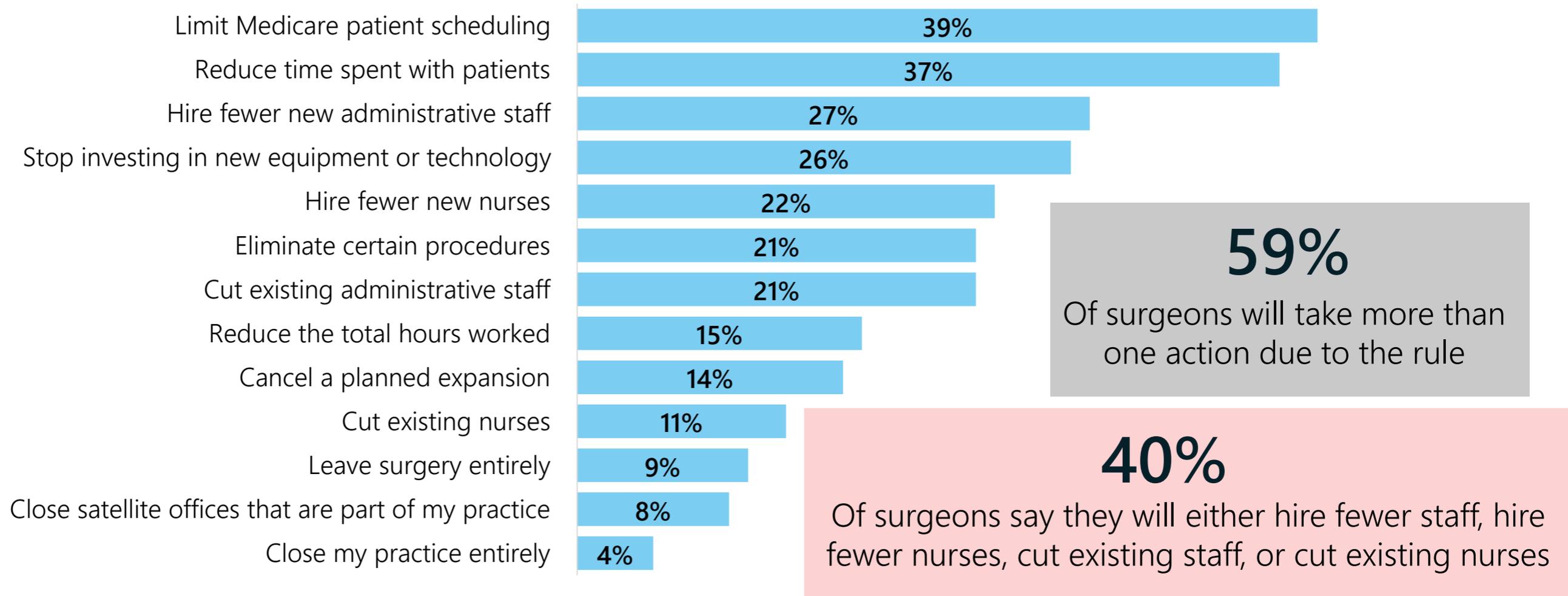
4%

I will drop all existing Medicare patients and take on no new Medicare patients

4%

The rule will limit time with patients and reduce staff

Consequences of the new CMS Rule

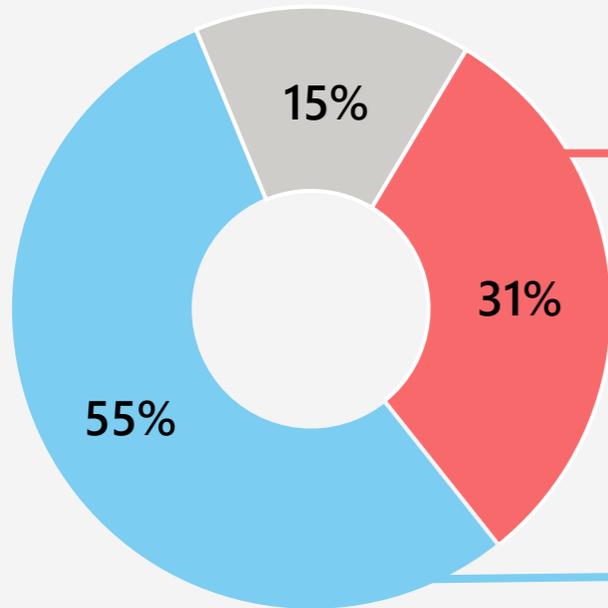


Q: If this new rule were to go into effect, what **specific actions** are you likely to take in response? Please select all that apply.

All surgeons face tough choices due to the new CMS rule

Spending less time with patients is a consequence of the rule regardless of Surgeons changing their patient intake

Change in Accepting Medicare patients?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know

Take Action in Response the Rule?

99% will be forced to act in response to the rule

76% will be forced to act in response to the rule

Top 3 Actions Taken in Response to the Rule

83% Limit Medicare patient scheduling

46% Reduce time spent with patients

36% Eliminate certain procedures

30% Reduce time spent with patients

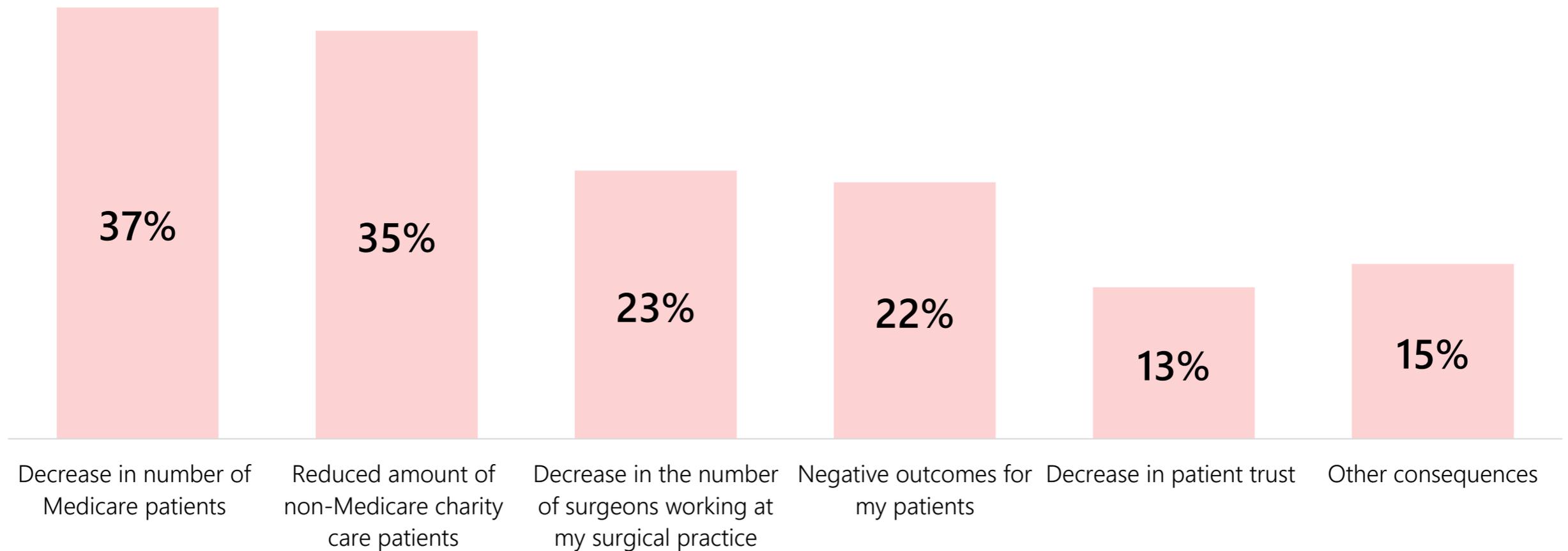
24% Hire fewer new administrative staff

21% Stop investing in new technologies

Surgeons worry about a decrease in care to patients

Almost four-in-ten surgeons are concerned about a decrease in Medicare patients as a result of the rule, while more than a third are also worried about a reduction in non-Medicare charity case patients

Consequences of CMS Rule



Q: Which of the following do you believe will be consequences of the new rule going into effect? Please select all that apply.

Timely and complex procedures may be eliminated

Potential Procedures Eliminated Due to CMS Rule



Q: You indicated you may need to eliminate certain procedures if the new rule went into effect. Which specific procedures do you think you will need to eliminate?

Surgeons are worried about the implications for patients

Some surgeons will be forced to reconsider the types of patients they take on as well as procedures they perform as a result of the rule going into effect. In addition, some surgeons are considering early retirement

Actions Taken in Response to CMS Rule

Pull out from ER calls



Pull out of ER calls where I pick up many Medicare, Medicaid and ACA patients.

Deprioritize Medicare revenue streams



Revenue will be found in ways **decreasing services** to Medicare patients.

Retire/Look for alternative sources of income



Begin to **transition out of full-time surgery** as a profession for alternatives sources of income and to pursue other interests.

Potential Procedures to Eliminate

Focus on non-Medicare patients



I will need to **eliminate procedures on Medicare patients** to focus my attention on non-Medicare patients. **I cannot continue or expand my practice or recruit new surgeons** to our area with these low Medicare rates.

Stop doing complex procedures



Stop performing complicated procedures... and refer these patients to tertiary centers, **requiring patients to travel from home to get surgical care.**

Stop taking elective cases



Most elective general surgery cases. **I will likely stop accepting government payers all together.**

Q: You indicated you may need to eliminate certain procedures if the new rule went into effect. Which specific procedures do you think you will need to eliminate?