

# HealthLeaders<sup>Media</sup> FACT FILE

MAY 2009

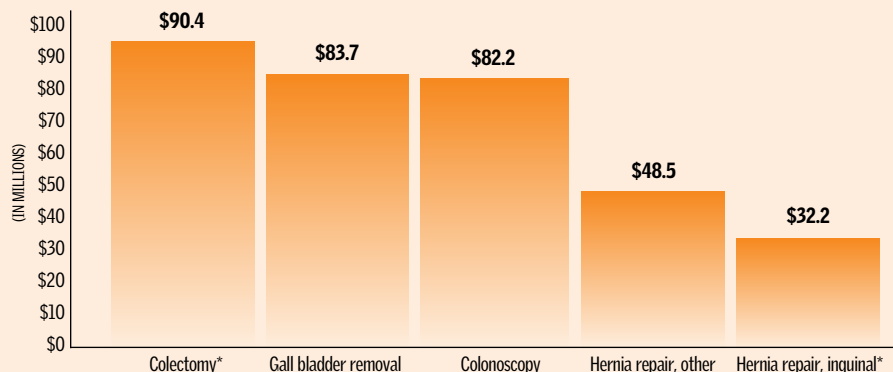
## General Surgery

Medicare payments to general surgeons peaked in the middle of this decade and have been sliding since. After rising steadily from \$1.51 billion in 2000 to \$1.86 billion in 2005, payments slipped to \$1.77 billion in 2007. The top five procedures account for about a third of a billion dollars, with

colectomy No. 1. And while payments for open colectomies have declined from \$114 million in 2002 to about \$90 million in 2007, payments for laparoscopic colectomies have increased over that same period from just under \$5 million to \$28 million.

### TOP 5 PROCEDURES

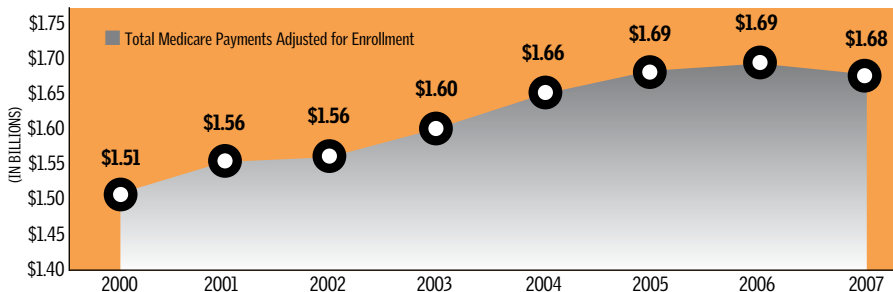
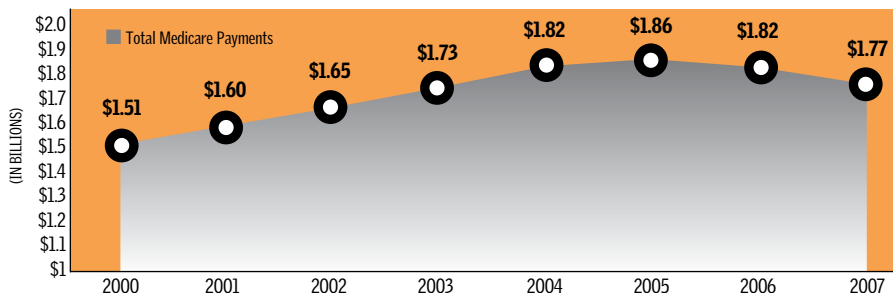
The top Medicare physician payments for general surgeons in 2007 came from these procedures.



SOURCE: Thomson Reuters \* non-laparoscopic/open

### MEDICARE PAYMENTS DECLINING

Medicare payments to general surgeons are declining. And that decline in payments cannot fully be explained by the movement of Medicare patients from standard Medicare to Medicare Advantage. Some declines may be attributable to substitution effects, others are due to declines in per procedure payments.



SOURCE: Thomson Reuters

### Lining up

Colonoscopies represent a top source for Medicare payments for general surgeons, amounting to \$82 million in 2007. This 2006 data shows the percentage of adults aged 50 years and over, who have ever had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy. While the U.S. average is 57.1%, that varies by state, from a low of 49.8% in Louisiana to a high of 69.2% in Rhode Island.

United States	57.10%
Alabama	53.30%
Alaska	55.20%
Arizona	56.60%
Arkansas	52.60%
California	57.10%
Colorado	57.20%
Connecticut	68.70%
Delaware	68.40%
District of Columbia	64.70%
Florida	58.90%
Georgia	57.00%
Hawaii	54.10%
Idaho	54.20%
Illinois	55.60%
Indiana	56.40%
Iowa	55.80%
Kansas	56.50%
Kentucky	58.60%
Louisiana	49.80%
Maine	64.20%
Maryland	66.70%
Massachusetts	66.30%
Michigan	66.10%
Minnesota	68.20%
Mississippi	50.40%
Missouri	57.80%
Montana	52.90%
Nebraska	51.40%
Nevada	55.20%
New Hampshire	63.60%
New Jersey	58.30%
New Mexico	52.90%
New York	63.90%
North Carolina	61.80%
North Dakota	56.50%
Ohio	57.10%
Oklahoma	51.70%
Oregon	60.70%
Pennsylvania	58.80%
Rhode Island	69.20%
South Carolina	59.50%
South Dakota	55.90%
Tennessee	56.20%
Texas	56.30%
Utah	62.70%
Vermont	64.80%
Virginia	65.30%
Washington	63.70%
West Virginia	53.40%
Wisconsin	64.00%
Wyoming	52.60%
Guam	NA
Puerto Rico	37.80%
Virgin Islands	37.80%

SOURCE: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation; [www.statehealthfacts.org](http://www.statehealthfacts.org)

Upcoming Topic:  
» Inflation

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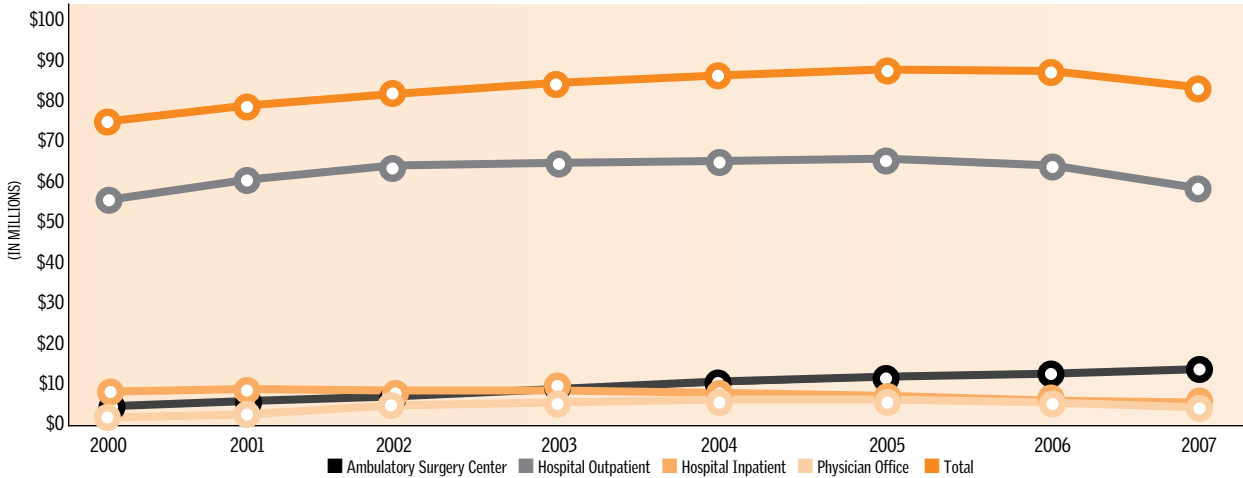
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## THE ASC CONTRIBUTION

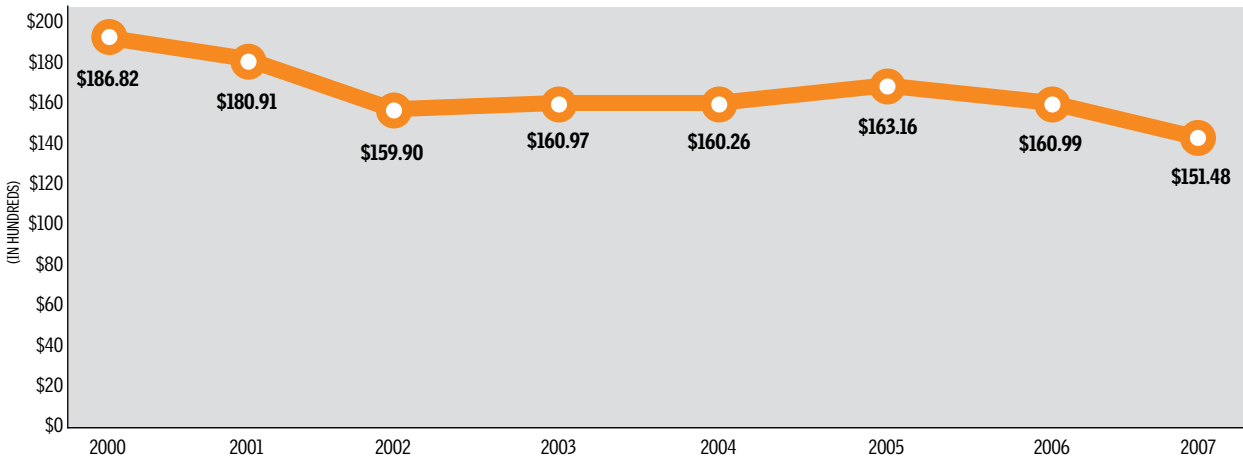
Total Medicare payments for colonoscopies continue to drop for general surgeons, even with the steady increase in volume through ambulatory surgery centers. This data, which is enrollment adjusted, shows the settings where general surgeons are generating their colonoscopy Medicare payments.



SOURCE: Thomson Reuters

## LESS PER PROCEDURE

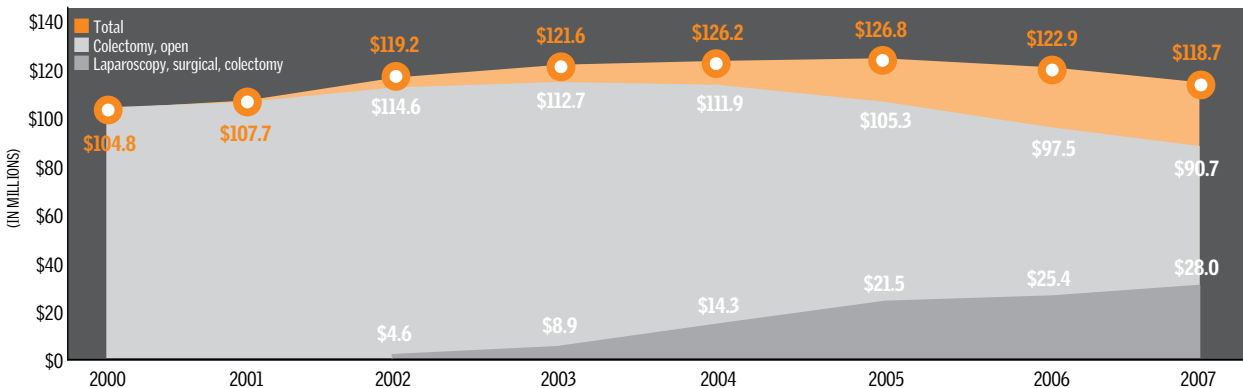
Even when total payments to general surgeons for colonoscopies peaked in 2005, they were making \$23 less per procedure than at the start of the decade. By 2007, the per procedure rate had dropped to \$151.48, down from \$186.82 in 2000.



SOURCE: Thomson Reuters

## LAPAROSCOPIC GROWTH

While total Medicare payments to general surgeons for colectomies drop, that decline is mitigated in part by the growth of payments for laparoscopic colectomies.



SOURCE: Thomson Reuters

