



Disappearing 24/7 Hyperbaric Medicine: Reimbursement Solutions?

What possible solutions might exist to reverse this disturbing trend, and help ensure that those for whom early provision of hyperbaric oxygen therapy is imperative can gain necessary access? One approach would be financial, from a purchaser of health care perspective. Options they could consider, alone or in any combination, might include:

1. Reimbursement rates for hyperbaric oxygen treatments increased in those cases *initiated* outside of normal working hours.
~ Requires a new reporting/tracking process; modest anticipated net incremental provider income gain; is unlikely to offset on-call costs given relatively low number of emergent cases
2. Reimbursement rates for *all* hyperbaric oxygen treatments increased to those providers who maintain a 24/7/365 call response.
~Again, a new reporting/tracking process required; greater provider financial incentive; increases insurance company costs
3. Reimbursement rates decreased to providers of hyperbaric oxygen therapy who do not offer a 24/7/365 treatment response, while paying those who do at a higher level.
~ Possibly revenue neutral to insurers; increased incentive to provide 24/7/365 will depend upon degree of change in reimbursement rates
4. Development of a regional network of 24/7/365 hyperbaric facilities.
~ Supplemental funding support from facilities in each region who offer limited availability; increased insurance company payment rates for 24/7/365 network providers.
5. Insurance companies require providers who file claims for the provision of hyperbaric oxygen therapy to be available to provide/arrange such therapy for all of the conditions that respective insurance companies consider medically necessary.