VOL. 01 · OCTOBER 2026 · SAMPLE ISSUE

SAMPLE

The MedTech Brief

Spine & pain medtech, made simple. Two minutes, tops.

SPINE | PAIN | CODING | EVERY ISSUE



VOL. 01 · OCT 2026 · REIMBURSEMENT · HEALTH ECONOMICS · NEW TECH · NEW DATA

1 · THE BIG NUMBER 🔢

2027 proposals reward the implant. Injections keep eroding. 💡

Medicare floated next year's pay rates. Implants go up. Shots go down. Here are the big numbers.

+14.8%
63685 · SCS generator (spinal cord stimulator battery), surgery center rate

+9.8%
64555 · PNS (nerve stimulator) lead implant, surgery center rate

−3.8%
62323 / 64483 / 64493 · back steroid shots & facet injection, surgery center

$32.84
Proposed doctor-pay dollar multiplier (non-QP), −1.68%

Proposed vs. CY 2026 rates. Sources: ASIPP analysis of CMS-1850-P · CMS CY 2027 PFS fact sheet. Subject to change in final rules.

📖 Jargon Buster

ASC = surgery center **PFS** = Medicare's doctor pay schedule **CF** = the dollar multiplier in that schedule **SCS** = spinal cord stimulator **DRG** = a nerve-root stimulator **E/M** = an office visit **SIJ** = sacroiliac (low-back/pelvis) joint **BVNA** = zapping a nerve inside the vertebra **ODI** = a back-disability score **QALY** = a year of healthy life **ICER** = cost per QALY gained **CY27** = calendar year 2027

2 · QUICK HITS: THE MONEY 💵

📈 Surgery center rates climb

Under CMS-1850-P: SI joint fusion (27279) **+7.1%**, BVNA (64628) **+6.5%**, SCS leads (63650) **+6.2%**. Facet RFA (64635) **−4.3%**. Final rule due November 2026.

TL;DR **Private insurers often copy Medicare surgery center rates. Your case mix drives margin. Surgery centers also skip hospital prior auth.**

Hype meter: 🔥🔥🔥🔥

OPPS/ASC · Source: ASIPP · ASIPP detail (PDF) · CMS fact sheet

PROPOSED

📉 Heads up: doctor pay dips

The one-year 2.5% bump from 2026 ends. The dollar multiplier (CF, non-QP) drops to **$32.84**. An office visit (E/M) on the same day as a 0-, 10- or 90-day global procedure: the cheaper one gets paid at **50%**.

TL;DR **"Consult and inject same day" takes a direct hit if this is finalized.**

Hype meter: 🚨🚨🚨🚨

PFS · Source: CMS CY 2027 PFS proposed rule fact sheet

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3 · THE DATA 📈

🏥 SCS = 75% fewer pain visits

Manufacturer-reported · retrospective

Real-world analysis (Deer et al.): SCS patients had **75%** fewer pain-related visits after 5 years. DRG group (n=834): **73%** fewer.

TL;DR **Payers speak utilization. This one counts.**

Hype meter: 🔥🔥🔥

NANS 2026 · Source: Abbott press release, Jan 23, 2026

💶 SCS is cost-effective

Several authors Medtronic-affiliated

Belgian model (May 2026): DTM-SCS cost **€11,518/QALY** vs. usual care. Cost-effective in **99.7%** of simulations at €30,000/QALY.

TL;DR **Stronger value case for patients with no prior surgery.**

Hype meter: 🔥🔥🔥

J Pain Res 2026 · Source: Smet et al., J Pain Res 2026

🤔 Myth vs. Fact: "SCS wears off"

Boston Scientific FAST study: **82%** had ≥50% relief at 3 years. RELIEF registry (>500 patients): **74%**.

TL;DR **Answers the "SCS wears off" objection.**

Hype meter: 🔥🔥🔥🔥

NANS 2026 · Source: Medical Device Network, Jan 26, 2026

🦴 Pain docs can do SI fusion

STACI: 112 patients, 15 U.S. sites. Pain physicians did lateral MIS SIJ fusion. Pain fell **5.2 points** at 6 months (noninferior). No serious or device-related adverse events.

TL;DR **Backs IPM-performed 27279 as its rate rises 7.1%.**

Hype meter: 🔥🔥🔥🔥

PM&R 2026 · Source: PubMed 41612848

⚡ BVNA at 1 year

Prospective cohort (n=60): **49.1%** had ≥50% pain relief at 12 months. **52.8%** had ≥30% better ODI.

TL;DR **Real-world numbers for patient talks.**

Pain Med 2026 · Source: McCormick et al., Pain Med 2026;27(3)

4 · NEW TECH 🤖

🤖 AI joins SCS follow-up

Makes no clinical decisions

BIOTRONIK launched Embrace One Proactive Intelligence for Prospera SCS (July 20, 2026). Pilot: flagged **188** behavior patterns in **175** patients. **80.9%** answered outreach.

TL;DR **Remote check-ins now matter when choosing a device.**

Hype meter: 🔥🔥🔥

ASPN 2026 · Source: BIOTRONIK press release

🧲 MRI green light

FDA approved prone MRI for Abbott Proclaim SCS family, Eterna SCS and Proclaim DRG. New and existing patients.

TL;DR **Abbott cites data: ~84% of SCS patients need an MRI within 5 years.**

Hype meter: 🔥🔥🔥🔥

NANS 2026 · Source: Abbott press release (citing Desai et al., Spine 2015)

🗳️ Would you rather...

A) a **+14.8%** SCS generator rate, or B) skip the **50%** same-day E/M cut? Reply A or B.

❓ Pop quiz

Which code tops this issue's proposed surgery center bumps?

63685 · +14.8%

📅 Coming Up

Oct 22–25 ISPN Amsterdam
Jan 21–24 '27 NANS (early-bird ends Oct 27)
Jul 15–18 '27 ASPN

📬 Questions or product resources? tommy@akeraiomedical.com · Hype meter = our opinion, not data. Disclaimer: For informational purposes only. This is not medical, legal, coding or reimbursement advice. CY 2027 figures are CMS proposals and may change in final rules, so verify against CMS addenda before making decisions. Manufacturer-reported data may be company-sponsored. Product mentions are not endorsements, and Akeraio Medical may distribute products from companies named.