



Quality Focus:

Medicare Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI)

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The arrival of 2008 begins a new reporting period for many physicians who are voluntarily participating in the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI). I would like to take a moment to share with you a few recent highlights coming from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) specific to PQRI in the year 2008.

Throughout 2007, CMS has hosted a series of national calls on the topic of PQRI. Additionally, the CMS PQRI Web site for 2008 is continually being updated with information for physicians and their professional staff to access anytime. For those who may be new to PQRI, I have included a summary background to bring you up to speed, and then I have moved on and summarized a number of the 2008 updates. To access detailed specifications, please visit the dedicated Web site at www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI.

Background

The Tax Relief and Health Care Act (TRHCA) of 2006 authorized the establishment of a voluntary physician quality reporting system that was implemented in July 2007. This Act established provisions for bonus payments to eligible professionals for satisfactory submission of quality data on covered professional services furnished to Medicare beneficiaries from July 1, 2007, through December 31, 2007.

Eligible Professionals

The list of eligible professionals has been expanded for 2008. To view a detailed list of eligible professionals, visit the CMS PQRI Web site.

2008 Measures

The National Quality Forum and other consensus-based organizations have endorsed a total of 119 measures for 2008. This is an increase from the 74 quality measures approved for the 2007 reporting period.

New in 2008 is the addition of two structural measures focusing on the use of electronic health records or electronic prescribing. The addition of the structural measures is in alignment with the ongoing work regarding the adoption and

use of electronic health records. Also, several measures have been eliminated or revised for 2008. The details can be found by visiting the CMS PQRI Web site.

Funding

As established by TRHCA, \$1.35 billion will be allocated from the Physician Assistance and Quality Initiative Fund for physician payment and quality improvement initiatives furnished to Medicare beneficiaries in 2008. The reporting and incentive methodology for 2008 is unchanged from the methodology used in the 2007 reporting period.

Educational Resources

Please check the PQRI Web site frequently to learn of upcoming CMS national calls on 2008 PQRI.

Coding for Quality Handbook – Watch for the 2008 release to include specifications on the new measures along with tutorial worksheets.

As always, the CMS PQRI Web site contains all publicly available information and is your single source of information specific to PQRI.

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“Quality Focus” is a monthly feature presented by SDFMC, South Dakota’s Quality Improvement Organization. For more information about the SDFMC, visit their Web site at www.sdfmc.org or SDSMA’s Web site at www.sdsma.org.

This material was prepared by the South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for South Dakota, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.