

# AAFP News: AFP Edition

*Policy and Health Issues in the News*

## **Study: ABFM's Maintenance of Certification Program Improves Patient Care**

Physicians who have completed the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) Maintenance of Certification for Family Physicians (MC-FP) program show significant improvements in patient care, according to a study from the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) National Research Network. Researchers were able to link the electronic health records of individual physicians' patients to the dates the physicians completed the MC-FP Part II (self-assessment) and/or Part IV (performance in practice) modules, allowing the researchers to gauge the potential impact of those modules on patient care. The study sought to examine the relationship between a physician's completion of an MC-FP learning module and the type of care that physician's patients received, along with their health outcomes. Physicians who had completed any Part II or Part IV module showed greater improvements in most aspects of patient care analyzed in the study than did their counterparts who had not completed any of the modules. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20140310mc-fpstudi.html>.

## **Smartphone App May Help Prevent Group B Streptococcal Disease**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created a new tool to help prevent group B streptococcal (GBS) disease in newborns. The smartphone application features patient-specific and scenario-specific guidance consistent with the 2010 guidelines for the prevention of perinatal GBS disease. The free app, intended to improve prevention and management of maternal and neonatal GBS disease prevention at the point of care, generates customized guidance based on user input of patient characteristics. It allows users to select the appropriate portal—obstetric or neonatal—and answer questions about the patient, receive patient-specific management guidance based on the scenario entered, and obtain appropriate antibiotic regimens for patients who require intrapartum prophylaxis. The CDC developed the app in collaboration with the AAFP, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Nurse-Midwives. The app is available for Apple iPhones and iPads, and for Google Android devices. A web-based version is also available. For download instructions, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/groupbstrep/guidelines/prevention-app.html>.

## **Study Findings Suggest Patient-Centered Medical Home Model Needs More Work**

The results of a three-year study of the patient-centered medical home (PCMH) health care model found only limited improvements in quality of care and no reduction in use of services or total costs, contradicting results of other studies. The pilot study, which was conducted from June 1, 2008, to May 31, 2011, and included 32 primary care practices in Pennsylvania, was one of the largest and longest-running multipayer PCMH pilots in the United States. Researchers used claims data from four participating health plans to compare changes in the quality, use, and costs of care delivered to 64,243 patients in the pilot practices and 55,959 patients in 29 comparison practices. Improvements were noted in the use of electronic resources; the use of registries to identify patients in need of chronic care services increased from 30% to 85%, and the use of electronic prescribing increased from 38% to 86%. With research still in progress, the study authors and AAFP leaders agree that future medical home interventions need to be refined to produce better results. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/practice-professional-issues/20140312jamapcmhstudy.html>.

## **Major Health Insurers Concerned About Physicians' ICD-10 Readiness**

Some of the largest private health insurance plans in the United States say they will be ready by October 1, 2014, for implementation of the International Classification of Diseases, 10th ed. (ICD-10) code sets for outpatient diagnostic coding. However, some are concerned that small private practices are not further along in their preparations. The AAFP recently contacted representatives from UnitedHealthcare, Aetna, BlueCross BlueShield, and Humana, and asked them to share their testing processes and contingency plans. The representatives indicated that they are working to ensure success with larger clients first, such as hospital systems and large practice groups, before moving on to smaller physician practices. All of the payers had set up ICD-10 preparedness pages on their websites specifically dedicated to assisting physicians. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/practice-professional-issues/20140313icd10insurers.html>.

— AFP AND AAFP NEWS STAFF

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