



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

February 13, 2008

«Firstname» «Middle» «Lastname», «Credl»
«Organization»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «Salutation» «Lastname»,

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents nearly 94,000 physicians and medical students nationwide, to make you aware that the AAFP has recently adopted a new policy on "Transparency".

We strongly support efforts to increase the quality and affordability of healthcare provided by family physicians. Consumers and patients must take greater responsibility for their own health and wellness under the direction of their personal physician. Likewise physicians must engage in continuous quality improvement activities. To meet these responsibilities, patients and physicians need timely, meaningful performance information from insurance companies that is both useful and verifiable. The "transparency" of performance information is crucial, allowing both patient and physician to confidently implement their respective responsibilities.

Many payers are assessing physician performance using quality and cost-efficiency measures based on readily available administrative data (claims data) and reporting these ratings to physicians, consumers, and employers. The AAFP has existing policy relating to the development and use of performance measures, physician profiling and pay for performance programs, which are viewable on the AAFP web site at www.aafp.org/policies. We feel these policies are complementary to the Academy's new "Transparency" policy and should be considered together.

The Academy believes that sharing physician performance ratings with patients should include a description of and the source of the data, the clinical guidelines and the measures used. It should also include a clear description of the rating's limitations, and directions on how best to use the ratings.

www.aafp.org

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Page 2
February 13, 2008
AAFP Transparency policy

Patients should be made aware of the reasons why their personal physician may not receive a quality and/or efficiency rating/designation by a payer (e.g. insufficient data). The clinical guidelines used to assess quality of care should be clear. Publicly displaying physician performance should include both quality and efficiency, and not just efficiency ratings alone to better equip patients in making more informed health-related decisions.

Your time and engagement with the AAFP, its constituent chapters, and members are appreciated. We look forward to working together to improve the health of patients, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Kellerman MD".

Rick Kellerman, MD, FAAFP
AAFP Board Chair

Enclosure

AAFP Transparency policy

Transparency

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) believes that transparency in health care refers to reporting information which can be easily verified for accuracy. Both data and process should have transparency and an explicit disclosure of data limitations.

Transparency in health care includes, but is not limited to, easy availability of:

- payers' payment policies
- payers' claims adjudication software logic edits
- payers' fee schedules
- payers' clinical policies
- payers' data analysis methodology and performance measures used in rating
- physician performance
- reporting of physician health care cost and quality information