



AAFP News: *AFP* Edition

Policy and Health Issues in the News

ABFM and AAFP Team Up to Help Family Physicians Transform Their Practices

The American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) is one of 39 health care collaborative networks selected to participate in the federal Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative. The initiative was designed to help physicians transform their practices to enhance care coordination and expand information-sharing. The ABFM, in partnership with the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), will receive as much as \$538,000 to help offer the tools, information, and network support that physicians need to improve the quality of care they provide, increase patients' access to information, and ensure more judicious use of health care dollars. The initiative is part of a strategy advanced by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to strengthen quality of care and rein in health care spending. Its ultimate goal is to support 150,000 clinical practices in their efforts to share, adapt, and further develop their comprehensive quality improvement strategies over four years. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/government-medicine/20150930ticipaward.html>.

CMS Proposal on 30-Day Network Directory Updates Draws AAFP Ire

The AAFP recently pushed back when the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) suggested that insurers who participate in Medicare Advantage and health insurance marketplace plans be required to update their respective physician network directories every 30 days. In a letter to CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt, former AAFP Board Chair Reid Blackwelder, MD, noted that more than 60% of family physicians have contractual relationships with seven or more insurance companies. "If each of these insurers requested information on network participation and the physician's status on accepting new patients on a 30-day interval, a family physician would receive more than 90 such requests in a year," said Blackwelder. "We are concerned that the frequency of reporting recommended by CMS will have significant unintended consequences and may actually hinder the collection of accurate information." He noted the possibility that some overburdened physicians might choose to ignore such requests, making it difficult to provide accurate and timely information to patients. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/government-medicine/20151008directoryupdate.html>.

Obesity Care Model Calls for Integration Between Primary Care and Public Health

Members of the Institute of Medicine's Roundtable on Obesity Solutions have proposed a model to prevent and treat obesity that integrates primary care and public health resources. The model is explained in an analysis published in the September issue of *Health Affairs*. The authors propose that the new model include a system centered on individual patients and family engagement, restructured clinical services provided by physicians who are sensitive to the stigmatization of people with obesity, and better integration of clinical services and community systems that can make it easier for patients to lose or maintain their weight. This integrated care model seeks to change the approach to care delivery by supporting primary care physicians with services provided by dietitians, nurse practitioners, social workers, psychologists, and even community leaders and others who are not typically considered health professionals. One of the challenges of this integrated care approach is training physicians to optimize treatment for obesity while utilizing community resources. This training includes instruction in behavior change strategies and up-to-date information about new ways to treat obesity. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20150922obesitymodel.html>.

New Caucus Forms to Champion Primary Care on Capitol Hill

A new congressional caucus has been launched to promote primary care interests among lawmakers, and the AAFP is calling on members to encourage their legislators to join. The bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Primary Care, cochaired by Reps. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., and David Rouzer, R-N.C., formally launched on October 8, coinciding with a briefing titled "The Impact of Primary Care on Rural and Urban Underserved Communities." The caucus will focus on a handful of vital issues, especially training more physicians to enter primary care to meet rising demands for patient care. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/government-medicine/20151007pccaususannounce.html>.

— AFP AND AAFP NEWS STAFF

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