



AAFP News: AAFP Edition

Policy and Health Issues in the News

Free Toolkit Helps Physicians Assess, Maintain ICD-10 Progress

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has created a free *International Classification of Diseases*, 10th revision (ICD-10), Assessment and Maintenance Toolkit designed to help physicians manage their revenue cycles. This resource aims to assist physicians as they assess their ICD-10 progress using key performance indicators to identify issues that could potentially affect productivity and/or cash flow; address opportunities for improvement by troubleshooting issues spotted during that assessment; deploy tactics necessary for improvement, such as system enhancements and specific staff training; and maintain progress by keeping current on ICD-10. The toolkit provides links to educational resources to help clinicians and coders, and suggests that practices identify a physician champion to help work through coding issues, distribute information, and act as a liaison between all parties involved in the coding process. It also guides users through processes for identifying systems issues, resolving issues with payers, conducting hospital chart audits, and keeping systems and coding resources up-to-date. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/practice-professional-issues/20160907icd10toolkit.html>.

Physicians' Low Use of Telehealth Tied to Flawed Payment Models

Inadequate support from payers is hindering family physicians from using telehealth technology, according to an author of a recent study conducted by the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care. The study, which was published in the July-August 2016 issue of the *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, found that family physicians who used telehealth were much more likely than nonusers to work in federally designated safety net clinics or health maintenance organizations. Academic health centers reported the lowest use of telehealth. Graham Center researcher Megan Coffman, MS, told the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) that a key hindrance to family physicians adopting telehealth technology is that Medicare and many commercial insurers do not pay for telehealth services. She said physicians do not see a difference in quality whether care is delivered by telehealth or in person, but the incentive to use the technology is low if they are not reimbursed. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/practice-professional-issues/20160831telehealthstudy.html>.

AHRQ Releases Updated State Snapshot Tool for Health Care Quality Rankings

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released an updated interactive tool that gives users state-level data showing how all 50 states and the District of Columbia performed on more than 250 measures related to health care access and quality. The statistics for individual state snapshots were pulled from the AHRQ's 2015 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report. Snapshots focus on states' performance related to topic areas defined as National Quality Strategy priorities, prevalence of diseases and conditions, health status of priority populations, insurance status, access to care, type of care, and setting of care. Quality measures are compared to achievable benchmarks derived from the top-performing states. A bar graph categorizes and ranks 178 measures into three categories: far from the benchmark, close to the benchmark, or achieved/surpassed the benchmark. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/practice-professional-issues/20160908statesnapshots.html>.

AAFP Calls for "All-Hands-on-Deck" Effort to End Opioid Crisis

Resolving the nation's opioid abuse and misuse epidemic demands a multipronged approach that draws on expertise from both the public and private sectors, the AAFP recently told the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). A combined effort from the medical, education, public health, judicial, and pharmacy communities, as well as from policymakers at all levels, is necessary to end the "scourge of opioid abuse and addiction," AAFP Board Chair Robert Wergin, MD, said in a recent letter to HHS, in which the Academy responded to a request for information about prescriber education and training to prevent opioid overdose and opioid use disorder. Wergin detailed the AAFP's success in providing pain management and opioid-related continuing medical education (CME) to its members. He also reiterated the AAFP's opposition to mandatory CME on this topic and denounced any actions that would limit family physicians' ability to prescribe these drugs. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20160907hhsopioidrfti.html>.

— AAFP AND AAFP NEWS STAFF

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