



Commission on Quality and Practice 2020 Annual Report

COMMISSION ON QUALITY AND PRACTICE (CQP)

Resident

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Purpose & Scope of Work

The AAFP Commission on Quality and Practice (CQP) is composed of family physicians from across the nation with different backgrounds, experiences, and practice structures. These individuals all share a passion for establishing recommendations and policy related to the practice of family medicine. This commission covers an extensive variety of topics including practice management, health information technology use, privileging, physician payment, quality improvement, rural health, and healthcare delivery systems.

As the resident and student members of this commission, we were able to observe and participate in discussions related to these important topics during the in-person winter Cluster meeting in February, the virtual summer Cluster in May, and throughout the year through online forum posts. Given that residency and medical school curriculums do not typically focus on topics like practice management and reimbursement, it was an opportunity for us to learn more about new topics and see how the AAFP works on behalf of family physicians nation-wide.

Activities & Achievements

The committee had an active winter Cluster that consisted of discussing several resolutions that came forth from the AAFP Congress of Delegates. Topics included medication refill requests from pharmacies, insurance coverage for chronic pain treatment, hospital privileges, and prompt discharge summaries for Medicare patients, among others. We were able to see how the Congress of Delegates, made up of representatives from all 50 states, directly formulated resolutions that came to the Commission. As a group, we were able to thoroughly discuss and review the policies, and put them into action.

Between winter and summer Cluster, CQP was actively involved in shaping AAFP policy related to COVID-19. Through discussion forums, this Commission worked on policy statements for COVID-19 point of care testing, the COVID-19 response for employed physicians, COVID-19 payment relief for rural physicians from HHS, and postponement of non-essential, elective care during the height of the pandemic. It was interesting being on the committee that helped to create such powerful policy statements during this pandemic.

The summer Cluster occurred virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. One main topic was the adoption of documentation guidelines developed by the American Medical Association by CMS.

These guidelines will replace those established in 1995 and 1997. The AAFP created educational documents to help members make this transition for both employed physicians and solo/independent physicians. Because this change will require EHR and billing updates, there is also a section on discussing these new changes with vendors. Another important topic was how COVID-19 led to changes regarding acceptability of telehealth, including OCR waiving enforcement of HIPAA-compliant software and DEA allowing controlled substances to be prescribed via telehealth. The AAFP supports future expansion of telehealth as a valuable asset to primary care.

Resident Reflection

It has been an educational experience to see firsthand how business is conducted at this AAFP committee on Quality and Practice this year, and to hear the perspectives from a wide variety of family physicians in different settings and parts of the country on matters relating to how we practice. As a resident, though I am not yet in practice, I feel more prepared and aware of the discussions occurring that will be relevant to me as a practicing family physician, as well as the process by which the AAFP committees seek, discuss, and form resolutions around such issues.

I also feel empowered by speaking up as a resident to represent family medicine residents and to offer my perspective and my experiences, even if I am still at my level of training and not yet in independent practice. It was a good opportunity to meet and network with passionate family physicians from all over the country and hear their stories, as well as how the ongoing changes in our healthcare system affect them in the office or in their hospital. Thanks to this involvement, I see myself continuing to be involved in the AAFP as an organization as we work to serve our members as best as we can while keeping family medicine strong.

Student Reflection

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as the student representative to the Commission on Quality and Practice this year. It was a great learning experience as we dove into complex business-related topics that we don't have the opportunity to learn about in medical school. I especially appreciated the role that the CQP played in shaping AAFP policy statements for the pandemic. This commission was essential when it came to creating practice policy that helped guide family physicians everywhere. It was incredible being part of this commission and having the opportunity to participate in these important discussions!

I would definitely recommend this position to fellow medical students, especially if you are interested in the business side of medicine and policy. I had the opportunity to work alongside some of the most passionate and intelligent physicians I have ever met, and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn from them. Their dedication to their commission positions makes me certain that the AAFP and the specialty of family medicine as a whole are in good hands.

Note: This report was prepared by the resident or student representative(s) listed and includes their account(s) of the business conducted during their term. This is not an official record of business proceedings from the AAFP or any other entity. To find out more about the business of the AAFP, its congresses, commissions, and current policies visit aafp.org.