

CMS offers CME program for quality improvement

By Jay A. Gold, MD, JD, MPH, and Shanin Pepple

Through a new program, Wisconsin physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners can earn continuing medical education (CME) credit for participating in quality improvement projects in their own clinics.

The American Medical Association (AMA) will award Category 1 credit and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) will award Prescribed credit to physicians and other health care professionals participating in designated health care quality improvement activities.

The credit is offered through a national CME program of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). MetaStar, Inc., Medicare's Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for Wisconsin, will administer the program for Wisconsin practitioners.

The CME program was created with the following objectives in mind:

- to increase physician participa-

tion in QIO quality improvement projects;

- to provide credit based upon practitioners' active participation in process improvement within their office setting; and
- to build quality improvement capacity among participants by incorporating desirable actions (use of guidelines, process improvement, performance measurement) into the program.

To earn CME credit, practitioners must focus on improving care in 1 or more of 3 clinical areas: diabetes testing, influenza and pneumococcal immunizations, and breast cancer screening. Practitioners can earn up to 10 CME credits in the first year for each clinical area and up to 6 credits per clinical area in subsequent years. There is no charge to physicians and other health care professionals to participate.

Participation in the program will entail a change in office practice designed to improve clinical performance on specified quality indicators, such as the use of clinical flow sheets for patients with diabetes in order to improve appropriate rates of A1c testing, lipid testing, and dilated eye exams. An ongoing measurement process will assess performance and evaluate the impact of office practice changes on quality of care.

To help practitioners meet the

Requirements

To receive credit, a physicians and other health care professionals must

- enroll in the program (enrollment form attached)
- collect baseline data
- implement a change in office practice designed to improve clinical performance on specified quality indicators
- measure performance and evaluate the impact of the office practice changes
- modify or expand the improvement interventions based on analysis of the performance data
- submit a progress report to MetaStar quarterly.

requirements, MetaStar will provide proven, effective resources to implement system changes such as samples of flow sheets, chart stickers and standing orders, patient education materials, and registry software. MetaStar's health care quality improvement staff is available for consultation and support.

For more information on the CME program, contact Carol Ferguson-Knisely, Clinical Quality Specialist, at cferguso@metastar.com or 608.441.8217.

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