

## Physicians Quality Reporting Initiative Overview

The Physicians Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) is a voluntary program under Medicare authorized by a law passed by Congress late in 2006. Medicare considers PQRI as the first step toward paying physicians to reward quality over volume. PQRI is part of the president's value-driven healthcare agenda to address preventable errors, uneven quality of care and rising healthcare costs. ASTRO has committed numerous resources to developing measures for PQRI and educating its membership about the program and encouraging participation. ASTRO also voiced concerns, via legislation and regulation, about the lack of a formal evaluation of the program, use of quality measures developed outside the AMA Physician Consortium, as well as other more technical issues about its implementation.

Under the 2007 program, physicians and other eligible professionals were able to receive bonus payments of 1.5 percent of their total allowed Medicare charges, subject to a cap, by satisfactorily submitting quality information for services they furnished between July and December 2007. More than 109,000 professionals participated in the 2007. Of those, more than 56,700 met statutory requirements for satisfactory reporting and are receiving incentive payments totaling \$36 million. The average incentive amount for individual professionals is more than \$600 and average incentive payment for a physician group practice is over \$4,700. All eligible professionals that participated in the 2007 PQRI can access confidential feedback reports aggregating their data showing how they compare with other participants.

In 2008, PQRI again offers bonus payments of 1.5 percent of total allowed charges to participating physicians reporting quality data from January 1, 2008, through December 31, 2008. The program also features an increase to 119 quality measures that could be reported, the ability to report measures within a group for a specified number of patients and the use of registries to report quality measures. The 2008 measure set includes two breast cancer measures used in 2007 as well as five prostate cancer measures that were collaboratively developed by ASTRO and American Urologic Association.

### 2009 PQRI

Under new law passed by Congress, physicians that successfully participate in PQRI in 2009 and 2010 are eligible for a 2 percent bonus, no longer subject to a cap. In August 2008, Medicare published a proposed set of quality measures to use to submit data for PQRI in 2009. The proposed measures (below) include appropriately removing a breast cancer measure for reporting and replacing it with three cancer care measures developed by ASTRO in partnership with other physician groups, as well as three prostate cancer measures developed in concert with AUA:

- Cancer Care: Pain Intensity Quantified.
- Cancer Care: Medical and Radiation Oncology – Plan of Care for Pain.
- Cancer Care: Radiation Dose Limits to Normal Tissues (Lung, Pancreas).
- Prostate Cancer: Avoidance of Overuse of Bone Scan for Staging Low-Risk Prostate Cancer Patients.
- Prostate Cancer: Adjuvant Hormonal Therapy for High-Risk Prostate Cancer Patients.
- Prostate Cancer: Three-Dimensional (3D) Radiotherapy.

Congress also has authorized CMS to post on its Web site names of eligible professionals who satisfactorily submit PQRI data. ASTRO has voiced concerns to CMS about publicly reporting PQRI participation data without validating that data through an evaluation and is working with Congress to ensure that such a Web site reports information that is fair, accurate and meaningful to physicians and consumers.

For more info, go to [www.astro.org/PublicPolicy/PQRIInformation/index.asp](http://www.astro.org/PublicPolicy/PQRIInformation/index.asp).