

The Memphis Medical Society

News Bulletin

February 17, 2009

Clarity on Prescribing CME Requirements

In 2006, the TN Board of Medical Examiners approved a new rule that physicians include a prescribing course as part of their continuing medical education (CME) requirements. The change is part of an effort by the BME to address a perceived controlled drug misprescribing/overprescribing problem in Tennessee.

There has been some confusion that a class is required annually. To clarify, the rule requires every physician to complete a one (1) hour course in prescribing practices as part of his/her mandatory 40-hour continuing medical education requirements every two years. There is an online course available from the **TN Foundation for Quality Patient Healthcare** as part of the **TN Prescription Safety Program**.

Physicians do not have to complete the course by years' end, they only need take a one-hour class as part of the 40 hours CME licensure requirement. Physicians need to keep proof of completion with all other CME hours taken. A new class is under development to be offered in mid-2009.

CME requirements are that medical licensees must complete 40 hours of CME during the two calendar years (January 1 – December 31) that precede the year of licensure renewal. At least one (1) of the 40 hours must be a course designed specifically to address prescribing patterns. The BME will begin auditing for the prescribing patterns CME in 2009. This means that those renewing in 2009 will have to have completed this requirement in 2007 or 2008.

Medicare advisers to recommend 1.1% physician pay raise, 2010

The American Medical News reports that, in an annual report to lawmakers from the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC), "Congress' Medicare advisers will recommend that physicians receive a 1.1 percent pay increase in 2010 instead of the roughly 21 percent cut that is currently on tap." The recommendation is based on an estimate that "costs to physicians of providing care will go up by nearly 2.5 percent next year." And, although Congress does "not always follow the panel's advice," it is often used "as a starting point for debate."

The American Medical Association (AMA) "welcomed MedPAC's recommendation for an increase in 2010," noting that "cutting Medicare physician payments by 21 percent next year is untenable," according to AMA Board of Trustees Chair-elect Rebecca Patchin, M.D. The commission is also expected to recommend "that Congress boost Medicare payments to primary care doctors by establishing a special claims modifier," which would "produce higher rates for evaluation and management services for those physicians than for doctors who are not considered to be in primary care."

PITCH – 2009 - Physicians Involved in Tennessee's Capitol Hill

Wednesday, March 25 - Bus will depart Society at 6:30 am

The Tennessee Medical Association is asking members to go to Nashville to show their support for MLR and other issues of great importance to organized medicine. Last year's weekly visits by physicians were a big success and were the buzz around Capitol Hill. Legislators have voiced their hopes that physicians will stay as involved this year.

Shelby County's assigned date is Wednesday, March 25 to represent physicians statewide. There is no cost to attend. Lunch will be provided compliments of TMA. We are asking that each practice designate at least one physician to attend. The bus will depart from the Medical Society at 6:30 am. The return trip (leave Nashville) will be at approximately 4:00 pm. If you are a physician, please wear your white coat.



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Most Americans Still Rely on Word of Mouth for Physician Referrals

"A vast majority of Americans prefer word of mouth when choosing a new doctor or hospital, despite a drive to post doctor cost and quality information online," according to a survey released Dec. 4 by the Center for Studying Health System Change. Investigators surveyed 13,500 adults, and found that "10.8 percent of patients look to online ratings sites to find a primary care physician, while 50.3 percent rely on friends or relatives, 38.1 percent on doctors or other healthcare personnel, and 34.7 percent on health plans." With respect to "specialists, 6.8 percent of patients use online ratings sites, 68.5 percent seek referrals from their primary care physician, 19.9 percent rely on friends, 18 percent on another doctor, and 10.5 percent on health plans." The survey "had a 43% response rate."



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Metro Care Physicians - Diminishing Revenues & Satisfaction: A Survival Guide for Physicians - presented by James Orlikoff

March 4, 2009 - 6:00 pm, light buffet, 6:30 - 8:30 presentation

March 5, 2009 - 7:00 am, continental breakfast, 7:30 - 9:30 presentation

Fogelman Executive Center at the U of M, 330 Innovation Drive

Brace yourself...growing populations of uninsured and underinsured, physician shortages, aging baby boomers, rising healthcare costs and expectations, our current financial crisis, the global market...all converging. Where do You fit, how can You survive?

All physicians and practice administrators are encouraged to attend. All MetroCare physicians in attendance will earn a \$100 credit applied to 2010 dues. Register on-line at www.metrocaredocs.com. For questions, please call Jonna or Janie at 360-1360 with any questions.

Psychologists Prescribing Bill –

Potential Legislation in the Making – ACTION REQUIRED!

For the 13th consecutive year, the psychologists are back at the Tennessee State Capitol in larger numbers than ever before, organized, focused and renewing their messages that MD's and DO's overprescribe, don't listen to their patients, and are inaccessible. Psychologists are trying to convince legislators that a few additional hours of training is sufficient for them to write prescriptions that required physicians and other qualified healthcare providers years of training to achieve.

Psychologists want to be prescribers without bearing the cost or taking the time and proper medical coursework to safely prescribe to patients. Since they are trained in counseling, the psychologists say, their use of the prescription pad would be much more judicious than physicians' and that they would take some patients off medications prescribed by physicians. The psychologists further claim erroneously that family physicians don't have the background or training to adequately care for the mental health needs of patients.

Now is the time to let legislators hear from you! This issue does not just impact psychiatrists, family physicians and pediatricians. All physicians should be concerned when allied health providers wants to expand into a realm in which they neither have the background nor experience to safely protect patients. If legislators don't hear from large numbers of physicians, they are going to believe that physicians don't care whether this bill passes. **DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN!**

Go to this link to log in and send your message:

<http://www.voterveice.net/link/target/tnma29093396.aspx>

February MGMA Meeting – Thursday, February 26

at 11:30 am at the Racquet Club of Memphis

Author and speaker, Mr. Ed Horrell will serve as facilitator to take your "hot topics" and help find answers through our membership. I encourage you to share your experiences and your "best practices" with us at our meeting. If you would like to email your questions or topics in advance, please do so to David Harano at dharano@gicentersouth.com. Please RSVP by Tuesday, February 24 by calling Ms. Betty Lee at 901-761-0200 or email at blee@mdmemphis.org.