

Physician Quality Reporting in 2008: What Every Physician Practice Should Know

PATRICIA DONOVAN: This is Patricia Donovan for the Healthcare Intelligence Network. Today I am speaking with Dr. Bruce Bagley, medical director of quality improvement for The American Academy of Family Physicians. Dr. Bagley is presenting at HIN's webinar, on "Physician Quality Reporting in 2008: What Every Physician Practice Should Know". Welcome back to the Healthcare Intelligence Network Dr. Bagley.

DR. BRUCE BAGLEY, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FOR THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS: Hi Patricia.

PATRICIA DONOVAN: And thank you very much for keeping us up to date on the PQRI initiative. To begin with, what advice do you have for physicians who have already been participating in PQRI?

DR. BRUCE BAGLEY: There is certainly a good number of physicians who have been reporting their quality data for the last six months of 2007. And my advice to them would be to make sure that they look at their own data to see how they've been doing as far as performance goes. Because if they don't look at their own data the first indication that they're going to get from CMS will be some time in mid July, and if they wait until then to find out their level of performance they will have lost an opportunity for as much as 6 months to improve that performance. So since the main reason for this program is to promote quality improvement, we'd recommend that people respond to their own data, and try to put systems in place to get better performance and get to work on that long before they have another 6 months of data sent off to CMS.

PATRICIA DONOVAN: So I get the sense from what you're saying that even though this is a pay for reporting initiative right now, that could change?

DR. BRUCE BAGLEY: That's right. I think CMS has full intention to move, at some point, whether it's going to be 2008 or 2009, to a pay for performance, in other words that the level of your performance may actually have something to do with a bonus.

PATRICIA DONOVAN: I see, thank you Dr. Bagley. Moving on, the CMS website clearly states at the moment that physicians do not have to have electronic health records to participate in PQRI, but it has added two structural measures for 2008. One is the adoption and use of health information technology, which we refer to as the electronic health records and the second is the adoption and use of e-prescribing. What message is CMS sending to physicians with these inclusions do you think?

DR. BRUCE BAGLEY: Well I think CMS was actually almost desperate, if you will, to come up with a measure that would be cross cutting so that virtually any physician in any specialty would be able to report something important to CMS and qualify for PQRI. And rather than scramble to come up with clinical measures for every single specialty, which is more difficult than it might seem, CMS decided to go with something like electronic health records and e-prescribing so virtually any physician any specialty can report that. And it's also totally consistent with the CMS policy and the President's policy for moving electronic health records forward.

PATRICIA DONOVAN: Thank you Dr. Bagley. We know that a lot of physician practices are, if they are not already using it, they're investigating the idea. And when we last spoke in December of 2006, you predicted that approximately 40% of family physicians would have adopted EHR's by this time. Do you feel that was an accurate prediction?

DR. BRUCE BAGLEY: Not only was that accurate I think we're actually doing a little bit better. And I know the most about family physicians because we've just surveyed them a few months ago. And our latest numbers show that 37% of family physicians already have implemented electronic health records, another 13% are in the process of implementing, and 25% beyond that are shopping for systems. So that means only 25% are not doing something about electronic medical records as we speak.

PATRICIA DONOVAN: I see, thank you. Well those are all the questions that I have today Dr. Bagley. I want to thank you for being with us and we're looking forward to hearing more from you during the webinar.

DR. BRUCE BAGLEY: Great. I look forward to talking with you.

PATRICIA DONOVAN: To register or get more information about this webinar please call 1-888-446-3530. This is Patricia Donovan for the Healthcare Intelligence Network.