AMDA Recommends PQRS Measures

AMDA’s newly formed Quality Committee has been busy reviewing all current Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) program measures. To date, the committee has vetted all the eligible PQRS measures to identify those that are most relevant to the post-acute/long-term care setting (PA/LTC) and has recommended 11 measures that are applicable to PA/LTC, ranging from advance care planning to coronary artery disease management. The committee has posted their recommendations to AMDA’s PQRS website at www.amda.com/practice-management/pqrs/clm.

AMDA’s PQRS website provides a step-by-step guide to getting started with the PQRS program. Among the useful resources on the website is an AMDA member exclusive, the PQRS Measure Tool Kit. Eligible professionals who fail to satisfactorily report data on quality measures during 2014 will be subject to a 2% reduction to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule reimbursement for services.

Laxton Named to Baldrige Board of Examiners

AMDA Executive Director Christopher E. Laxton, CAE, has been named to the Board of Examiners for the 2014 Malcolm Baldrige National Award. The Baldrige Award is the nation’s highest honor for organizational innovation and performance excellence.

Appointed by the Commerce Department’s National Institute of Standards and Technology Board, examiners are responsible for reviewing and evaluating applications submitted for the Baldrige Award, as well as other assessment-related tasks. The board is composed of more than 400 leading experts competitively selected from industry, professional, trade, education, health care, and nonprofit (including government) organizations across the United States.

Board appointees must meet the highest standards of qualification and peer recognition, demonstrating competencies related to customer focus, communication, ethics, action orientation, team building, and analytical skills. They must participate in a nationally ranked leadership development course based on the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and the scoring and evaluation processes for the Baldrige Award.

Named after Malcolm Baldrige, the 26th U.S. Secretary of Commerce, the Baldrige Award was established by Congress in 1987. Awards are given annually to organizations in each of six categories: manufacturing, service, small business, education, health care, and nonprofit. The award is designed to promote innovation and excellence in organizational performance, recognize the achievements and success of U.S. organizations, and publicize successful performance strategies. Since 1988, nearly 100 organizations have received Baldrige Awards.

Webinars Span Miles, Connect Isolated Practitioners

Practitioners who often need an airplane or boat to visit a colleague have to be creative about communication and education. Toby Smith, DO, onsite physician at Ka Punawai Ola in Kapolei, HI, and his colleagues at AMDA’s Hawaii state chapter have made effective use of the Society’s webinars to share information and enable their members to receive, CMD, CME, and nursing credits, and enjoy quality conversations with colleagues. “We asked our members what topics they are interested in and found webinars that address these,” said Dr. Smith. “We then presented these programs at our quarterly meetings.” Among the most popular was a program on “Avoidable Hospitalizations/Readmissions.” He said this was one of the group’s most highly attended events, as many practitioners questioned their role in preventing readmissions. The webinar enabled them to share their questions and experiences with their colleagues. “We accessed the program through the AMDA website, and afterwards we had a discussion about our experiences and best practices with reducing readmissions and hospitalizations,” he said. “It was a great conversation.”

The feedback on these programs has been excellent, Dr. Smith said. “A big draw is the convenience factor; we are able to provide access to top national experts that our members usually would have to travel hundreds of miles to see,” he said.

Even with the convenience of the quarterly meetings, some practitioners can’t get away from their remote outer island locations to attend. For those individuals, Dr. Smith said, “We used a Skype connection to enable more people to participate, and we had a discussion via conference call.” The conversations after the webinars are invaluable, Dr. Smith said. “These discussions are a great time for collaboration. We come from different perspectives – we’re medical directors, attending physicians, nurse practitioners, academicians – and we work in settings that include church-affiliated communities, national chains, and VA [Veterans Affairs] facilities. We share our different experiences and talk about how we can all work together. We discuss what is happening in policymaking at the state level and how we can be involved.” Participants take what they learned back to their islands and facilities and use them as a platform to implement new ideas and innovations.

There are two more AMDA webinars set for 2014. “Accountable Care Organizations,” presented by Pennsylvania-based medical director J. Kenneth Brubaker, MD, CMD, is scheduled for Oct. 23. On Dec. 10, Nicole Brandt, PharmD, CGP, FASCP, associate professor of geriatric pharmacotherapy at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, and Eric Tangalos, MD, professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, will present “Sleep Issues With LTC Patients.” For more information or to register, go to www.amda.com/cemedirect/#web.

NQMC Accepts AMDA’s Incontinence Measures

The National Quality Measures Clearinghouse (NQMC) has now accepted two sets of Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) Implementation Measures to be published to the NQMC database. In June, the organization accepted 22 pain management measures, and later in the summer, NQMC accepted 21 urinary incontinence (UI) measures. The UI measures reflect the stepwise approach to UI recognition and management outlined in AMDA’s clinical practice guideline on the topic. All measures now appear on the NQMC website.

“AMDA is proud to continue to be involved in projects that support our mission of improving quality of care, and to now have two sets of quality measures included in the NQMC database,” said AMDA executive director Christopher Laxton, CAE. NQMC only accepts and publishes measures that are evidence-based and meet its inclusion criteria. Among these requirements, measures must address some aspect of health care delivery or population health that can be classified into one of several domains. Additionally, measures must be in current use or have been pilot-tested within the last 3 years, and the submitter must provide English-language documentation in a print or electronic format.

AMDA currently is working to finalize its heart failure quality measures for its next round of submissions to the NQMC, scheduled for later this year.