Spotlight on Policy

Society to Continue Advocacy Efforts

Society members helped us score another legislative victory. In March, the Senate voted 90-2 to pass an agreement reached by Leaders Schumer and McConnell to extend the 2 percent Medicare sequester moratorium that expired on April 1. The bipartisan legislation, offered as an amendment by Senators Shaheen and Collins, would provide a nine-month extension of the moratorium, through December 31. It also contains some technical corrections related to rural health clinics and disproportionate share hospitals. Hundreds of Society members wrote letters to their Congressional delegations describing how cuts to PALTC services would be devastating to the nation’s vulnerable seniors who require more care oversight now more than ever.

The House of Representatives passed different legislation earlier that would both extend the moratorium through the end of the pandemic and eliminate an additional 4 percent Medicare sequester scheduled for January 1 expect legislation to be considered later in the year to waive those cuts. The Society will continue to stress that any cut to these services is unacceptable.

Thank you to all Society members who continue to play a vital role in our advocacy efforts!

Society Joins Others in Urging CMS to Make MVP Program Improvements

Recently the Society, along with the American Medical Association and other national groups, sent a letter to CMS with recommendations to ensure that the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Value Pathway (MVP) successfully implemented. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, clinicians have had the option to opt out of MIPS since 2019. The letter urges CMS to address multiple issues within the MIPS MVP program before it is officially launched. The recommendations include reinventing MIPS to ensure MVPs fulfill their Aims, MVP scoring, and keeping MVP voluntary. The groups noted that they, “strongly oppose retitling traditional MIPS and making MVP participation mandatory.” MVPs should incentivize participation by reducing the need to report for the sake of reporting in MIPS, allowing physicians to focus their quality improvement efforts in Medicare around a singular clinically relevant episode of care and patient outcome, and implementing simplified scoring policies, including multi-category scoring.

Read the full letter at https://bit.ly/3tmASVF.

Eligibility Steps

The process to become a CMD is an education and experience model. There is no test for certification. Candidates for certification must meet the eligibility requirements under three steps, each of which include education and experience qualification requirements.

To become certified, candidates must meet all eligibility requirements under each of those options in both areas of experience in practice and in education. Eligibility step one is general eligibility, step two is clinical eligibility, and step three is management eligibility. The complete details on all the eligibility requirements can be found on the ABPLM website at https://www.abplm.org/cmd-applications.

General Eligibility

Under step one, eligible candidates must document:

• Completion of a U.S. Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) accredited postgraduate training program, or a Canadian Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons or College of Family Physicians accredited postgraduate training program or completion of relevant U.S. post-graduate training and successful attainment of U.S. state licensure to practice medicine
• Current, unrestricted, state license as an MD or DO in the United States or an equivalent license to practice medicine in Canada
• A minimum of eight hours each month in service as a medical director in a post-acute and long-term care setting for the minimum number of years based on pathway eligibility requirements (two to three years)

Under step one, general eligibility, the body of knowledge required for certification is found in the “Core Curriculum on Medical Direction in Long-Term Care” (the Core; not to be confused with the “Competencies Curriculum for PALTC Medicine” [http://bit.ly/36zB6j2], which are not required to meet the CMD eligibility requirements). The Core is divided into three parts, one of which is required. Information on upcoming offerings of the Core can be found on the Society’s website at https://apex.paltc.org/page/core-curriculum-on-medical-direction.

Clinical Eligibility and Management Eligibility

Eligibility steps two and three require a candidate to choose the pathway options that are based on whether the candidate has American Board of Medical

Society Specialties (ABMS), AOA, or Canadian board certifications and any certificates of added qualification; and whether the candidate has completed a geriatric or hospice fellowship within the five years preceding the application.

Under step two, clinical eligibility, applicants document their clinical education and experience eligibility requirements.

Under step three, management eligibility, applicants document their management education and experience requirements.

Time Frame

• Completion of the Core Curriculum on Medical Direction in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care within the five years preceding application submission
• Between two and four years of experience as a clinician in PALTC within the five years preceding application submission
• Between two and three years of experience as a medical director in PALTC within the five years preceding application submission

Although an applicant must meet the clinical experience and medical director experience requirements before CMD certification, a letter of education eligibility may be submitted for consideration even before the years of medical director experience are completed. Applications for certification are reviewed twice annually, in June and December. The application deadlines are April 1 and October 1 of each year.

Costs

Registration for Core Curriculum course (2021):
• $2,690 for Society members (regular rate)
• $3,190 for nonmembers (regular rate)

Initial Certification (as of January 1, 2021):
• Society membership $395 (option-
al
• Application review fee: $525 for Society members
• $625 for nonmembers

Recertification application review fee:
• $400 for Society members
• $500 for nonmembers

For questions or further information on the process to become a CMD from the ABPLM, contact the ABPLM at cmd@paltc.org or call the director, Suzanne Harris, at (410) 992-3117.

Dr. Morton is an associate professor, director of the division of geriatrics, program director–nursing homes, and program director–geriatric medicine fellowship in the Department of Family and Geriatric Medicine at the University of Louisville, KY.

Process to Earn Certified Medical Director (CMD) Certification

by Laura J. Morton, MD, CMD

Today we really need nursing home medical directors who are engaged and knowledgeable about our regulatory and risk management concerns, quality improvement initiatives, infection control requirements, and upgrading clinical services to decrease rates of hospital readmission. In addition to having administrative knowledge, we need medical directors who are expert clinicians and can guide residents, families, and staff when tough clinical issues arise, especially about goals of care and end of life decision-making,” said nursing home administrator Mike Moranz, MPH, in a recent story published in Caring (2020,21[8]:6–7).

In the same article, Rebecca Elon, MD, CMD, writes, “An engaged medical director can act as an advocate for both patients and families, often helping the nursing home resolve difficult situations. A knowledgeable medical director can help create a stable and engaged staff who feel valued, are continuously learning, and can work together as a highly functioning team. A committed medical director can facilitate strong relationships with hospitals, helping ensure that the nursing home is seen as a preferred provider in this era of narrowed options.” Specialized training to become an engaged, knowledgeable, and committed medical director is the cornerstone of the American Board of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (ABPLM) Certified Medical Director (CMD) certification.

Offered by the ABPLM, a private certification board that is an independent affiliate of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine, CMD certification is awarded to physician medical directors who meet the eligibility requirements documented via an application to the ABPLM Board of Directors.

Laura J. Morton, MD, CMD