

ACS NewsScope

A Weekly News Update from the American College of Surgeons

September 25, 2009

HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE WEEK:

- * House Energy and Commerce Committee Amends H.R. 3200
- * CMS Releases Final Rule Limiting Recoupment of Overpayments
- * ACS Surgery Develops Weekly Curriculum Based on SCORE Web site
- * APSA Issues Call for Abstracts for Annual Meeting
- * CMS Announces Programs to Assist PQRI and E-Prescribing Participants
- * Advances in Trauma/Disaster Management CME Courses to Be Held in December
- * You Won't Want to Miss These Clinical Congress Sessions
- * ANZ Traveling Fellowship for 2011 Available
- * Learn Scheduling Techniques for Increased Productivity
- * Clinical Trials Methods Course Scheduled for November

HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE AMENDS H.R. 3200

On September 23, the House Energy and Commerce Committee addressed proposed amendments to H.R. 3200, known as America's Health Choices Act of 2009. The amendments were not brought before the committee when it approved the bill in July. The final package of amendments, most of which are technical changes and will have very limited effect on surgeons, was adopted by the committee with 28-22 vote. This is the last step before the House Rules Committee merges the three versions of H.R. 3200 approved by the Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor Committees. For more information about the Energy and Commerce Committee amendments, go to <http://energycommerce.house.gov>.

CMS RELEASES FINAL RULE LIMITING RECOUPMENT OF OVERPAYMENTS

On September 16, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule that prohibits Medicare from recouping overpayments if a provider or supplier files a timely request for appeal. Currently, CMS can recoup overpayments regardless of whether a provider or supplier has appealed the determination. Once the rule goes into effect, CMS will prohibit recoupment during the first and second level of appeal, as long as the first-level appeal is filed within 41 days of the first overpayment demand letter and the second-level appeal is filed within 60 days of a subsequent overpayment demand letter. If an overpayment determination is reversed in administrative or judicial appeals above the qualified independent contractor (QIC) level, CMS is liable for interest on recouped overpayments that accrued since the original determination. The fee-for-service appeals process consists of: (1) redetermination by a Medicare contractor; (2) reconsideration by a QIC; (3) a hearing before an administrative law judge; (4) a hearing before the Department of Appeals Board; and (5) federal district court review. The rule becomes effective November 16. To view the regulation, go to <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-22166.pdf>.

ACS SURGERY DEVELOPS WEEKLY CURRICULUM BASED ON SCORE WEB SITE

Mary Klingensmith, MD, FACS, program director of the general surgery residency program at Washington University in St. Louis, has recently assumed a position as associate editor for the American College of Surgeons (ACS) publication *ACS Surgery: Principles & Practice*. Dr. Klingensmith will manage the Weekly Curriculum and has developed a plan to integrate this curriculum with the American Board of

Surgery Surgical Council on Resident Education (SCORE) General Surgery Curriculum, which includes 28 organ system-based categories. The ACS Surgery Weekly Curriculum encompasses all of the "broad" diseases and conditions of the SCORE curriculum as well as the majority of the "focused" ones and is structured over a three-year cycle that can be used to integrate SCORE into a general surgery residency curriculum conference. Weekly recommendations are made for specific topics for lectures and discussions using SCORE readings and open-ended questions, respectively. Weekly topic-oriented multiple choice questions will be provided, with the capacity for program directors to track residents. In addition, approximately every six-weeks, sessions will be devoted to review of previous modules.

The curriculum will be available both directly from ACS Surgery at <http://www.acssurgery.com/> and through SCORE at <http://www.surgicalcore.org/>. For more information on the ACS Surgery Weekly Curriculum, contact customercare@bcdecker.com, call 800-568-7281, or fax 905-522-7839.

APSA ISSUES CALL FOR ABSTRACTS FOR ANNUAL MEETING

The American Pediatric Surgical Association (APSA) invites members of the American College of Surgeons to contribute abstract submissions for its 41st annual meeting, to be held May 16-19, 2010, in Orlando, FL.

The APSA's annual meeting provides an opportunity to present to over 700 pediatric surgeons from around the nation and internationally. The submission deadline is 5 pm CDT, October 1, 2009.

For more information on the APSA annual meeting and to access the abstract submission program and instructions, visit <http://www.eapsa.org/>.

CMS ANNOUNCES PROGRAMS TO ASSIST PQRI AND E-PRESCRIBING PARTICIPANTS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Medicare Learning Network (MLN) has announced the availability of a Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) and Electronic Prescribing Incentive Program (E-Prescribing) Web-based training course. The course centers on the completion, submission, and maintenance of the documentation required to successfully participate in the incentive programs. Participants will be eligible to earn continuing education credits. The course can be accessed by going to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNGenInfo> on the CMS Web site, scrolling down to the "Related Links Inside CMS" section, clicking on "Web Based Training (WBT) Modules," and selecting the PQRI and E-Prescribing incentive program module.

CMS also has announced that the following new and revised articles have been posted:

- New "Coding and Reporting Principles for the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) and the Electronic Prescribing (E-Prescribing) Incentive Programs," available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mlnmattersarticles/downloads/MM6514.pdf>
- Revised "Steps for Individual Eligible Professionals to Access Their 2007 Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) Feedback Reports Personally," available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0830.pdf>
- Revised "Steps for Organizations to Access Their 2007 PQRI Feedback Reports," available at <http://www.cms.hhs.ov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0831.pdf>

In addition, CMS has created PQRI Help Desk Resources to assist eligible professionals with their questions. For information about these services, go to http://www.coms.hhs.gov/PQRI/36_HelpDeskSupport.asp#TopOfPage.

ADVANCES IN TRAUMA/DISASTER MANAGEMENT CME COURSES TO BE HELD IN DECEMBER

The 32nd Annual Advances in Trauma continuing medical education (CME) course has been planned for December 11-12, 2009, in Kansas City, MO. Up to 14.25 CME credits are available for this course. The Disaster Management and Emergency Preparedness (DMEP) course will precede the Advances in Trauma course. The DMEP course will be offered on December 10, and will offer up to eight CME credits. For course registration forms and hotel reservation information, visit <http://www.facs.org/trauma/cme/advancesbroch2009.pdf>.

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THESE CLINICAL CONGRESS SESSIONS

--Space is still available for the skills course (SC) Essential Issues in the Management of Lower Extremity Ischemia (SC12), which will take place during the Clinical Congress on Tuesday, October 13, from 9 am-4:30 pm. This skills course will bring together experts in vascular and endovascular surgery to clarify the issues associated with achieving optimal results for the comprehensive treatment of lower extremity occlusive disease, utilizing open surgical as well as endovascular interventions. Lectures, case presentations, a panel, and hands-on exercises will be included. For more information, visit <http://www.facs.org/clincon2009/scientific/postgraduate.html>.

--Operation Giving Back (OGB) will host an Open Mike Session on Surgical Volunteerism on Tuesday, October 13, from 1:15 to 2:15 pm in the West Building of the McCormick Place Convention Center, Room W-475 AB. This forum will provide a chance for meeting attendees to share their experiences with volunteer outreach, present challenges they have encountered, or share useful tips and insights with colleagues. This is expected to be a lively and information-rich hour, during which participants will have three to five minutes to tell a story, pose a challenge, or stimulate discussion. Early sign-up is encouraged, so those who are interested in participating in this session should contact ogb@facs.org. Space permitting, a sign-up sheet will be available at the OGB booth until the afternoon of Monday, October 12.

--A range of postgraduate (PG) courses addressing contemporary topics in surgery will be presented during the upcoming Clinical Congress including two courses offering to aid in understanding and running a more effective practice.

The Business of Health Care: Understanding the Surgeon's Role (PG16) will take place on Saturday, October 10, from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. The goal of this course is to apply the fundamental principles of business to health care and to provide relevant managerial tools for the surgeon. This course focuses on core issues relevant to diverse clinical environments (community and academic practices) and teaches participants the skills to promote change within their institutions.

In addition, Medicare Compliance: Audit-Proof Documentation (PG24) will take place on Wednesday, October 14, from 8 am to 12:15 pm. Participants in this course, designed for physicians, will get an overview of The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the most common areas for violations, and strategies for establishing practice policies and procedures to minimize compliance problems. Practices are increasingly challenged to keep up with Medicare, and this course teaches the basic rules of participation, patient encounters, billing, and reimbursement. For more information, visit <http://www.facs.org/clincon2009/scientific/postgraduate.html>.

AND while you're in Chicago, why not take advantage of a free, 20-minute practice management consultation? ACS Fellows may register for a session in the Consultant's Corner, which will be staffed by Tom Loughrey, MBA, CCS-P, and Richard Ley. Consultations may deal with any issues Fellows are having within their practice, including contacts, compensation formulas, personnel issues, financial management, reimbursement, negotiations, compliance, mergers, pre-

retirement planning, bringing in a new partner, marketing, long-term strategies, technology issues, and so on.

The consults are available from 9 am to 4 pm Monday, October 12, and Tuesday, October 13, and from 9 am to noon Wednesday, October 14. To make an appointment, stop by the Consultant's Corner located next to the ACS Division of Advocacy and Health Policy's booth near the general registration area, or sign up online at <http://www.yourmedpractice.com/Ex/9/ACS-Consultants-Corner.htm>.

ANZ TRAVELING FELLOWSHIP FOR 2011 AVAILABLE

The International Relations Committee (IRC) of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) has announced the availability of the Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) Chapter of the ACS Traveling Fellowship. This fellowship is intended to encourage international exchange of information concerning surgical science, practice, and education, and to establish professional and academic collaborations and friendships.

The IRC is pleased to announce that, effective 2011, this traveling fellowship, which is the most venerable of the three traveling fellowships offered, will evolve from a one-way fellowship to a two-way fellow exchange between North America and Australia and New Zealand. This upgrade reflects the committee's friendly partnership with the ANZ Chapter.

The \$8,000 (USD) scholarship is available to a U.S. or Canadian Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. The ANZ Traveling Fellow will attend the annual Scientific Congress of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, which will be held in Adelaide, Australia, May, 3-6, 2011. The Traveling Fellow will also visit several surgical centers in Australia and New Zealand.

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is November 16, 2009.

The complete requirements and application form can be found at <http://www.facs.org/memberservices/traveling.html> or by contacting kearly@facs.org.

LEARN SCHEDULING TECHNIQUES FOR INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) and Economedix will present a live Webcast titled "Scheduling Techniques for Improved Productivity" at 1 pm Eastern time on Wednesday, September 30. These techniques may improve patient flow throughout the office, reduce patient waiting times, and lead to productivity improvements for both surgeons and staff. Other upcoming Webcasts are as follows:

- October 21 - ICD-9 Coding and ICD-9 Updates for 2010
- November 4 - E & M Coding ... Beyond the Basics
- November 18 - CPT Coding & CPT Updates for 2010

Each 90-minute Webcast, conducted by Tom Loughrey, MBA, CCS-P, will start at 1 pm Eastern time and will end with a question-and-answer period. Each program will be recorded for registrants who want to listen to the course a second time or who miss all or part of the program. ACS Fellows and their practices may register for individual Webcasts for \$99, a package of seven live Webcasts for \$497, or for the annual practice management Webcast series consisting of 24 courses for \$997. To register online, go to <http://www.YourMedPractice.com/ACS>; to sign up by fax, go to <http://www.YourMedPractice.com/PMWebcasts.pdf>. For additional information, contact Economedix by e-mail at rley@economedix.com or by phone at 877-401-9655. For practice management questions, go to

<http://www.yourmedpractice.com/Ex/12/PMQs-ACS.htm>. Questions will be answered via e-mail free of charge.

In addition, Economedix has recently released the Practice Management Audio Cast Series, which serves as a complete in-house practice management training system with more than 30 on-demand courses designed to help improve the performance, productivity, and profitability of surgical practices. For more information, go to <http://www.YourMedPractice.com/ACS>.

CLINICAL TRIALS METHODS COURSE SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER

The American College of Surgeons' (ACS) Surgical Research Committee will sponsor the ninth Clinical Trials Methods Course November 13-17, 2009, at ACS headquarters in Chicago. New this year are course didactics (including two added basic statistics lectures) that will be based on four successfully conducted clinical trials published in the literature. The four clinical trials will be distributed ahead of time to all participants.

This course is recommended for surgeons who plan to engage in clinical research at a leadership level. It includes concepts and development of skills in the design, implementation, and analysis of randomized clinical trials; observational studies; the use of large administrative databases; meta-analysis; funding mechanisms and budget development; outcomes (medical, patient-centered, and cost); and dissemination of results. Participants will work in small groups mentored by a surgeon and a biostatistician to develop a protocol.

Reserve your spot early because the course is limited to 50 participants, and it is only offered every other year. Preference is given to members of the College. The course fee is \$2,495.

Visit <http://www.facs.org/cqi/src/clintrial.html> for additional information about the course, a preliminary course schedule, online registration, and a list of faculty members. Questions? Call 312-202-5319, or e-mail mfitzgerald@facs.org.

