

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Get ready for the National Student Conclave in Providence in October and the Private Practice Section conference in Colorado Springs in November. The PT-PAC will have booths at both conferences and will be sponsoring parties at both as well. If you have any questions about those, please contact Mike Matlack. To become a key contact to a US Senator or Representative or to host an event, contact SCAPTA Federal Affairs Liaison Cathy Arnot at arnot@mailbox.sc.edu or send a message to our office at southcarolina@apta.org and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @SCAPTA1.

Regulatory Update

TRICARE and PTAs: In accordance with the FY2018 National Defense Reauthorization Act, TRICARE is engaging in rulemaking to add physical and occupational therapy assistants as TRICARE-authorized providers. The rule proposes that these providers will be added as TRICARE-authorized providers, under the same qualification requirements established by Medicare.

MedPAC: APTA submitted comments to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) in response to its June 2018 Report to Congress. MedPAC recommends that CMS increase reimbursement for ambulatory evaluation and management (E&M) services. To offset this payment increase, MedPAC recommends reducing reimbursement for non-ambulatory E&M services, including physical therapy. **2019 SNF/IRF Final Rules:** The final 2019 rules for skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRFs) are substantially similar to the proposed rule and include increases in payment of 2.4% for SNFS and 0.9% for IRFs effective October 2018. The final SNF payment rule adopts the PDPM effective October 2019. In doing away with the RUG-IV process, CMS adopted a model that bases payments on a resident's classification among 5 components, including physical therapy. Final payment is then calculated by multiplying the patient's case-mix group with each component (both base payment rate and days of service received) and then adding those up to establish a per diem rate. APTA President and APTA staff met with the White House on August 23 to discuss the role of physical therapy in pain management and discuss ways the Administration and APTA may collaborate in increasing access to physical therapy for pain management and treatment.

Reforms to Stark Law: APTA met with House Ways & Means majority and minority staff following the July 17 hearing Modernizing Stark Law to Ensure the Successful Transition from Volume to Value in the Medicare Program," that examined options to reform the Physician Self-Referral Law (Stark Law) to shift Medicare to a value-based system. Indications are that there will be legislation introduced this fall aimed at reforming the Stark law. Admin Burden:

Congressional Update

House of Representatives has been out all of August and the Senate has been in and out throughout the month. The Senate is hoping to pass numerous Committee bills regarding opioid legislation and put it on the floor in September. The Senate and the House opioids legislative priorities are different and will require a conference after the elections during the lame duck session.

Flash Action Strategy 2018: This year the annual flash action strategy will focus on opioids and the role PTs play in pain management. It will take place on September 27-28 (Wednesday and Thursday) and will be focused on getting students involved in advocacy. The Student Board already is aware of the dates and topic, APTA staff is working on graphics and messaging, and an email to educators will be going out in the next week or so.