

The Physician Quality Reporting System Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive Requirements of Self-Nomination for 2011

In accordance with section 1848(m) (7) of the Act ("Additional Incentive Payment"), CMS is introducing a new Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive. Beginning in January 2011, physicians who are incentive eligible for the Physician Quality Reporting System, or "Physician Quality Reporting", (formerly known as the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative, or PQRI) can receive an additional 0.5% incentive payment when Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive requirements have also been met.

In order to qualify for the additional 0.5% incentive payment, the physician will need to complete the following:

- Satisfactorily submit data, without regard to method, on quality measures under Physician Quality Reporting, for a 12-month reporting period either as an individual physician or as a member of a selected group practice.

AND

- More frequently than is required to qualify for or maintain board certification:
 - Participate in a Maintenance of Certification Program and
 - Successfully complete a qualified Maintenance of Certification Program practice assessment.

As defined in section 1848(m) (7) of the Act, a "Maintenance of Certification Program" is a continuous assessment program that advances quality and the lifelong learning and self-assessment of board certified specialty physicians by focusing on the competencies of patient care, medical knowledge, practice-based learning, interpersonal and communication skills and professionalism. Such a program shall require a physician to do the following:

- Maintain a valid, unrestricted medical license in the United States;
- Participate in educational and self-assessment programs that require an assessment of what was learned;
- Demonstrate through a formalized, secure examination, that the physician has the fundamental diagnostic skills, medical knowledge and clinical judgment to provide quality care in their respective specialty; and
- Successfully complete a qualified Maintenance of Certification program practice assessment.

A "qualified Maintenance of Certification program practice assessment," as defined in section 1848(m)(7) of the Act is one that includes an initial assessment that demonstrates the physician's use of evidence-based medicine; a survey of patient experience with care; and implementation of a quality improvement intervention to address a practice weakness identified in the initial assessment. The practice assessment must also require the practice to reassess performance improvement after the intervention.

The phrase "more frequently" may be interpreted differently by different Maintenance of Certification Programs. CMS is looking to see an attestation from a Maintenance of Certification Program entity that both the Maintenance of Certification Program itself and the practice assessment are completed once more by a physician than is required by a specific Maintenance of Certification Program.

Maintenance of Certification Program entities wishing to enable their members to be eligible for the additional incentive will need to complete the self-nomination process by **January 31, 2011**. Maintenance of Certification Program entities will need to be approved for participation by CMS. Qualified Maintenance of Certification Program entities will then be able to submit on the physicians' behalf. For consideration, Maintenance of Certification Program entities will need to submit the following:

- Detailed information regarding the Maintenance of Certification Program with reference to the statutory requirements. Indicate the organization sponsoring the Maintenance of Certification Program, and whether the Maintenance of Certification Program is sponsored by an American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). If not an ABMS board, indicate whether the program is substantially equivalent to the ABMS Maintenance of Certification Program process.
- The frequency of a cycle of Maintenance of Certification for the specific Maintenance of Certification Program of the sponsoring organization; including what constitutes "more frequently" for both the Maintenance of Certification Program itself and the practice assessment for the specific Maintenance of Certification Program of the sponsoring organization.
- What was, is, or will be the first year of availability of the Maintenance of Certification Program practice assessment for completion by a physician.
- What data is collected under the patient experience of care survey and how this information would be provided to CMS.
- How the Maintenance of Certification program monitors that a physician has implemented a quality improvement process for their practice.
- Describe the methods, and data used under the Maintenance of Certification Program, and provide a list of all measures used in the Maintenance of Certification Program for 2010 and to be used for 2011, including the title and descriptions of each measure, the owner of the measure, whether the measure is NQF endorsed, and a link to a website containing the detailed specifications of the measures, or an electronic file containing the detailed specifications of the measures.

All information listed below must be submitted to CMS by a qualified Maintenance of Certification Program entity by **March 31, 2012**. The Maintenance of Certification Program entities will assess and submit, in a secure format, for the physician(s) the following:

- The eligible physician's name, who would like to participate in the Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive for 2011.
- The individual National Provider Identifier (NPI); not group (NPI).
- The applicable Tax Identification Number(s) or Social Security Number (SSN) used to bill and receive Medicare reimbursement.
- Attestation from the board that the information provided to CMS is accurate and complete.
- Maintenance of Certification Program entity has signed documentation from physician(s) that he/she wishes to have the information released to CMS.
- Information from the experience of care (patient satisfaction) survey.
- The physician(s) successfully completed a qualified Maintenance of Certification Program practice assessment for the year.
- Information certifying the physician(s) participated in a Maintenance of Certification Program for a year, "more frequently" than is required to qualify for or maintain board certification status, including the year the physician met the board certification requirements for the Maintenance of Certification Program, and the year the physician(s) participated in the Maintenance of Certification Program "more frequently" than is required to maintain or qualify for board certification.
- Information certifying the physician(s) completed the Maintenance of Certification Program practice assessment one additional time more than is required to qualify for or maintain board certification, including the year of the original Maintenance of Certification Program practice assessment or that a Maintenance of Certification Program practice assessment is not required for the physician(s), and the year of the additional Maintenance of Certification Program practice assessment completion.

We anticipate that a list of conditionally qualified Maintenance of Certification Program entities will be posted by the spring of 2011 on the Physician Quality Reporting System section of the CMS website (www.cms.gov). We anticipate completing the qualification process by mid-2011 and will post the final list of Qualified Maintenance of Certification Program entities on the Physician Quality Reporting System section of the CMS website (www.cms.gov) at that time.

Physician(s) desiring to be considered for the 2011 Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive should review the documents referenced above for the qualified Maintenance of Certification Program entities. The Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive is applicable for physicians participating in the Physician Quality Reporting System via individual and group practice.

reporting (Group Practice Reporting Option I or II). Physician(s) will need to work with their selected Maintenance of Certification Program entity to ensure successful completion of the Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive participation requirements.

The Maintenance of Certification Program incentive payment will be paid at the same time as the Physician Quality Reporting incentive payment for 2011 for those physician(s) that qualify. It will be a separately identifiable payment on the Physician Quality Reporting feedback report for 2011. The 2011 Physician Quality Reporting will calculate the Maintenance of Certification Program incentive payment of 0.5% based on allowed Medicare Part B PFS charges for covered professional services furnished between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011. Physician(s) cannot receive more than one additional 0.5% incentive even if they complete a Maintenance of Certification Program in more than one specialty. The Maintenance of Certification Program incentive will not be awarded to physician(s) who have not qualified for the Physician Quality Reporting incentive.

The system shall determine incentive payments for group practices participating in the GPRO I or GPRO II who had group practice members who were found incentive eligible for the Maintenance of Certification Program incentive payment. If the group practice satisfactorily reported Physician Quality Reporting, the group practice shall receive an additional 0.5% incentive payment based on the allowed charges attributed to the group practice members who were found eligible for the Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive payment.

Please refer to www.cms.gov for more information regarding the Maintenance of Certification Program.

Maintenance of Certification Program self-nomination letters should be sent to:

**2011 Physician Quality Reporting System Maintenance of Certification Program Incentive Self-Nomination
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Office of Clinical Standards and Quality
Quality Measurement & Health Assessment Group
7500 Security Boulevard
Mail Stop S3-02-01
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850**

The letter must be received no later than 5 p.m. E.S.T. on January 31, 2011.