

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
First Friday Call
Moderator: Jill Darling
July 07, 2017
1:30 p.m. EST

Operator: Good afternoon, my name is Tiffany and I will be your conference operator today. At this time, I would like to welcome everyone to the first Friday call clinician outreach meeting. All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. After the speakers' remarks, there will be a question and answer session.

If you would like to ask a question during this time, simply press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, press the pound key. Thank you, Dr. Eugene Freund, you may begin your conference.

(Eugene Freund): Hi all, thank you for calling in. It's good to be on the line with you again. And we're still working our new process. I know that we had a bit of a -- a bit of a glitch with our e-mailing. If you only just got the announcement of this in the last day or two, please drop me a line.

And check your spam boxes too, so that we can try to figure out what happened with that particular outgoing message. We're going to try a couple of different things, but we want to give you a little more notice. I will note that this call is information only and not intended for the press.

And we have a relatively short agenda today. And I will just start off right now with Toula Bellios with the Center for -- why am I having trouble with that? Toula Bellios talking about the Open Payments update.

Toula Bellios: Thank you, Gene. I appreciate that intro. Hi, everyone, my name is Toula Bellios. I am the Division Director for the Stakeholder and Engagement

Group within the Centers for Program Integrity. I'd like to give you just a quick overview of our program.

The Open Payments Program requires that transfer of value by drug, device, biological and medical supply manufacturers to physicians and teaching hospital be published on a public website. We actually did this last Friday, June 30th. CMS published its fourth year of public data.

This data -- this publication consisted of calendar year 2016 data as well as any newly submitted and updated payment records for program year 2013 through 2015. In program year 2016, (actual) manufacturers and group purchasing organizations reported 11.96 million records, consisting of \$8.18 billion in payments and ownership and investment interest to physicians and teaching hospitals.

Payments are reported to CMS in three major categories; general payments, research payments, and last, ownership and investment interest. In program year 2016, payments in these three major categories were \$2.8 billion in general payments, \$4.36 billion in research payments, and \$1.02 billion in ownership or investment interest held by physicians or their immediate family members.

A complete summary of the program year 2016 data and programs year 2013 through '15 is available through openpaymentsdata.cms.gov. Again that website is open payments -- plural -- I'm sorry openpaymentsdata.cms.gov. Over the course of the Open Payments Program, CMS has published 40.77 million records accounting for \$24.9 billion in payments and ownership and investment interest.

As reminder to physicians and teaching hospitals are able to review the data attributed to them and may initiate disputes on any data that they believe to be incorrect or inaccurate prior to the data being published. In addition, disputes may be initiated through the end of the calendar year in which the record is first published.

I believe we have e-mailed to all registered attendees a two page infographic about the program as well as the key statistics I reviewed. And that's really it on our update on our program. Are there any questions?

Operator: As a reminder, to ask a question, please press star followed by the number one on your telephone keypad. We will pause for just a moment to compile the Q&A roster. Again, that is star one on your telephone keypad to ask a question. There are no questions in queue at this time. I turn the conference back over to our presenters.

(Eugene Freund): OK, thank you much. And you know, I think it is important that -- especially if you have practitioners that are covered by the Open Payments that they do know that while the current results are published that there's still time if they find something incorrect that they can review that and go through the proper approach toward getting any errors corrected.

So, there's still time even though it's already -- that it's recently been published. Kelly, are you ready to talk a little bit about the QPP program?

Kelly DiNicolo: I sure am, thanks. It's nice to be here today everyone. I believe most of you know that on June 20th, CMS issued a proposed rule that would make changes in our second year of the Quality Payment Program. This is part of the requirements of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

Most of you just probably know that as MACRA, it's a mouthful. Our goal with these proposed changes are to further simplify the program, especially for small independent and rural practices while ensuring fiscal sustainability in high quality within the Medicare program.

The Quality Payment Program is updated annually as part of MACRA and it's meant to promote greater value within the healthcare system. Clinicians in this program choose how they want to participate in the program based on their practice size, specialty location or patient population.

So, this proposed rule is amending some existing requirements and also contains some new policies for doctors and clinicians participating in the

program. It encourages participation either in advanced alternative payment models or in the merit basis for those payment systems.

Additionally, we really used clinician feedback over the past year to shape the second year of the program. If finalized, the proposed rule would further advance our agency's goals of regulatory relief, program simplification, state and local flexibility, and the creation of innovative approaches to healthcare delivery.

So, one of the big things that was introduced this year are virtual groups. And I encourage you obviously to take a look at the rule itself. If you go onto qpp.cms.gov and click on the about section, and then you'll see a resource library. Within that, we have a link to the proposed rule.

But we also have developed, like we did with the proposed and final rule last year, a summary fact sheet that I think most will find helpful. And what should be going up by Monday is we have a slide deck. So, if you take the fact sheet and add picture and put it in slide deck form that's essentially what that PowerPoint presentation will do.

As a reminder, comments on the rule -- and we would really love folks to comment on it -- are due August 21st at 11:59 p.m. And just -- as a reminder, we've consistently kind of trying to continue our outreach and education with this, and so we had a national listening session earlier this week.

It was on Wednesday. And then the week prior, we had a national webinar. You can find materials including recordings of those on qpp.cms.gov. Again, click on the "about" section and go to resource library and then you'll find those recordings under the webinars and educational programs.

And then, I just wanted to draw your attention in addition to the proposed rule materials, we have made a couple of other updates to the qpp.cms.gov site. Probably the most significant is the new section targeting those working in small, underserved and rural populations.

And then, just as a gentle reminder to keep updated on the latest things happening with QPP. I would encourage you all to sign up for our QPP listserv and that can be found at the bottom of the QPP page and just click on subscribe to updates. And we send probably a newsletter out at least every few weeks, sometimes more frequently.

And that will include updates to the latest materials. It will have links to sign up to register for upcoming webinars and listening sessions. We do plan -- and you're the first group to hear about this because we haven't announced it publically until just now -- we are going to have a second call -- or really a third or fourth call on the proposed rule based on the call held earlier this week.

We're getting some really good questions about it. And so, we want to have an office hour session. And so that will probably be August (inaudible) to, again, talk with the CMS subject matter experts, those who wrote the proposed rules -- to talk to them about questions you have about something that's in the rule.

We can't take this call or comments received as official comments for the proposed rule. Again, you need to do that through the formal process. That's in the Federal Register. But it is a chance better to understand the policy that is being proposed. So, look forward to having you on that call.

We'll be sure to make sure that you guys are informed about all of this, but would love for you -- if you haven't already -- to sign up for our listserv that way I can make sure that you're getting the information in multiple ways. And with that, happy to take any questions that you may have.

Operator: As a reminder, to ask a question please press star followed by the number one on your telephone keypad. We will pause for just a moment to compile the Q&A roster. Again, that is star followed by the number one on your telephone keypad to ask a question.

Your first question comes from the line of James Vavriecke with ACC. Your line is open.

James Vavriecke: Hi, Kelly, thanks for mentioning there's some future calls coming up. Maybe you said it and I just didn't hear, do you have dates for that office hour session at all, or is that still yet to be announced?

Kelly DiNicolò: Still yet to be announced. We just talked about it yesterday. In fact, the call on Wednesday, I don't know if you participate on that, we have a lot of (inaudible) answering questions and they're really good questions because they help us understand where maybe we could do further (indications).

So, no specific date set. We're looking at likely August and then maybe we'll do a repeat in September, just depending on how many participants we have.

James Vavriecke: Great, that is helpful, thank you. Yes, and I was on that Wednesday. It was a good call. Thank you.

Kelly DiNicolò: OK, good. (See, even though) -- So, you have access to the slide deck. In fact, we've already updated it. And then a recorded version of that should be being posted hopefully by next week and then we did a webinar version of that (late Friday). That is already posted on qpp.cms.gov to the (inaudible) section.

James Vavriecke: Great, thank you.

Kelly DiNicolò: Sure.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Jan Towers with the American Association. Your line is open.

Jan Towers: I was going to ask the same question that was just asked, so I have my answer, thank you.

Kelly DiNicolò: No problem.

Operator: There are no further questions in queue at this time.

Eugene Freund: Are there any general questions or comments that anybody wishes to make before we close out?

Operator: If you would like to ask a question or make a comment, please press star followed by the number one on your telephone keypad. Again, that is star one on your telephone keypad to ask a question or make a comment. There are no questions in queue at this time.

Eugene Freund: Well, thank you very much. Feel free to send comments my way as you need to, ask questions and we're here to try to help with problems you may be having. So, my inbox and telephone are open. And we're looking to have the next meeting on Friday, August 4th.

We will have, in person, as an encouraged option for you, in the Humphrey building on that date. And thank you very much for calling in and look forward to talking to you many times in the future. Thank you.

Operator: This concludes today's conference call. You may now disconnect.

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