

gripa news

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Message from the President and the Chairman of the Board

By now you have undoubtedly heard that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has published a favorable advisory opinion on our GRIPA Connect™ Clinical Integration program.

As only the second organization in the nation to receive a favorable opinion from the FTC, your IPA can now rightfully be considered a national leader in the movement toward a progressive business model for independent and community-based practitioners.

The opinion means that you can join GRIPA Connect Clinical Integration with confidence that GRIPA's program is compliant with federal antitrust laws. This positive opinion substantially reduces the legal risks for GRIPA and its members.

A large part of our purpose in this endeavor was to strengthen the bonds of collaboration among physicians in our network. We believe that even the effort to

date has furthered this goal. Throughout, we have been gratified by the number of physicians who have come to meetings, listened to our plans, offered questions and assistance, even challenged our assumptions. Your involvement made the design of our clinically integrated network stronger, and will continue to improve its implementation.

You have heard from us many times about how this effort will benefit physicians and their patients with higher quality health care. As our community of physicians, hospitals, labs, imaging facilities, and pharmacies "connects," we expect that you will see those benefits in action—less time with paperwork, more time with patients, easier access to Clinical Guidelines, the continued support of our care management teams.

We are moving full steam ahead. Our Technology Consultants are in the field, training physicians and their staff members on use of the web portal. If you haven't

already scheduled your training session, we urge you to call Provider Relations at 585-922-1525 to do so.

You'll find links to the FTC opinion and press release on our web site, www.gripa.org. Thank you for your continued support.



Michael Kukfa, M.D.
Chairman
GRIPA Board



Gregg Coughlin
President
GRIPA

GRIPA AWARDED ORGANIZATIONAL CERTIFICATION IN CREDENTIALING BY NCQA



Greater Rochester Independent Practice Association (GRIPA) was recently awarded an Organizational Certification in

Credentialing by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). This most recent certification is a renewal of the 2005 certification and is based on a comprehensive certification survey that took place from May to July, 2007.

The certification process was composed of two stages:

- An offsite review of GRIPA's electronically submitted materials and readiness evaluation
- An onsite review of GRIPA's credentialing processes

The GRIPA credentialing program addresses the selection of providers for participation in its network using established criteria to assess qualifications

and competencies of those health care professionals.

NCQA is an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to assessing and reporting on the quality of managed care plans, managed behavioral healthcare organizations, preferred provider organizations, new health plans, physician organizations, credentials verification organizations, disease management programs, and other health-related programs.

Message from the Chief Medical Officer

Recently I traveled to Washington, D.C with Deb Lange, GRIPA Director of Analysis, to speak at a National Health Policy Forum session, “**What Can Physician Profiling Do for Medicare?**”

This meeting explored the feasibility and utility of physician profiling in the Medicare program as a way to address rising spending. Profiling—that is, comparing the average resource use of a physician’s patients to the resource use of other physicians’ patients—has been examined by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC). Although they used different methods, both organizations identified wide variations in the efficiency with which physicians deliver care. Based on its analyses and interviews with private payers, GAO recommended that Medicare adopt physician profiling techniques to improve the efficiency of physician practices.

I shared with the group our pay-for-performance model and demonstrated how it has been used to improve quality of care for our population of patients and how it has, over time, reduced the overall cost of caring for those patients. We’ve accomplished this by decreasing complications of chronic diseases and decreasing hospitalization rates, while paying physicians a premium rate. The presentation was very well received and a senior staff member of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services remarked that they would like to find a way to replicate what we have done on a national level.

It is truly gratifying to attend these meetings as your representative, share our experiences with physician leaders across the country, and receive positive feedback from regulatory authorities as well. Thanks to you and your active involvement, GRIPA has developed systems that others are interested in emulating. As we roll out our Clinical Integration Program, we will have even more to be proud of.



Eric Nielsen M.D.

Eric Nielsen, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer, GRIPA



PHYSICIANS CAN EARN AN ADDITIONAL 1.5% ON MEDICARE FEE-FOR-SERVICE BUSINESS

GRIPA wants to share some information with you about the recent announcement by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to revise payment rates and policies under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS). Under the voluntary Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) physicians are able to choose a minimum of three (3) measures from a designated set of quality measures to report on claims for dates of service from July 1 to December 31, 2007 for Medicare Fee-For-Service patients. It’s important to pick measures that are applicable to your patients.

In return for participating, physicians can earn a bonus payment from CMS, subject to a cap of 1.5% of total allowed charges, for your covered Medicare physician fee schedule services.

To be eligible for the bonus payment, you will need to report the new codes on at least 80 percent of the patients to whom they apply. CMS is currently looking only at whether or not you submitted the data, not the content of that data.

Other payers are interested in similar measurements and will likely follow Medicare’s lead in adopting the PQRI measures for their members. GRIPA is aware of this trend and is looking for ways to incorporate such measurement into its Clinical Integration program.

A list of the measures is available on the CMS website at www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI/01_Overview.asp or by calling GRIPA Provider Relations at 585-922-1525.



PHARMACY SERVICES —THE RIGHT PRESCRIPTION



Michael Van Ornum
Consulting Clinical Pharmacist

GRIPA Clinical Pharmacy Services assists GRIPA providers in delivering optimal and cost-effective pharmaceutical care

for the benefit of patients and practices.

In 2005 GRIPA provided expertise in chronic medication management and geriatric therapies to Independent Living for Seniors (ILS) to address high drug costs and

to identify medication therapies needing improvement. A team of GRIPA pharmacists collectively met the ILS challenges. After six months, the cost savings justified contract renewal, and the contract has been renewed ever since.

In the spring of this year, GRIPA and ILS began working together to implement electronic prescribing. Within weeks, ILS staff trained on eRx NOW, a free e-prescribing system. (eRx NOW is the same engine that drives the e-prescribing solution GRIPA will provide through the GRIPA Connect portal.) Prescribing workflows were analyzed, an implementation schedule developed, and evaluation milestones set.

In less than a month, GRIPA helped ILS convert its paper processes into an electronic system that provided the same or better service to its patients at a fraction of the expected workload—the right prescription in more ways than one.

“GRIPA was a great help to us as we changed the pharmacy process at ILS,” says Anne Olinger, M.D., Medical Director of ILS. “The pharmacists have also been enormously helpful as we navigate our new e-prescribing system. We are looking forward to utilizing this process to provide even better services for our patients.”

GRIPA CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES: SPOTLIGHT ON DIABETES SERVICES



Cori Wyman
Consulting Clinical Pharmacist

Care Management Services (CMS) at GRIPA is comprised of a multidisciplinary team of pharmacists, social workers and registered nurses

offering expertise in geriatrics, depression, diabetes, pharmacology, and general case management. GRIPA CMS focuses on identifying physician concerns in the medical management of complex patients, reducing administrative burdens by helping patients navigate the multitude of payer and community resources, and promoting standards of care and evidence-based guidelines.

Physician concerns and ultimately the quality and cost effectiveness of care are addressed through five key programs and services, including general case management, clinical consulting pharmacy services, depression support, diabetes group and one-to-one support, and geriatric assessment. In this issue of GRIPA News we'll focus on GRIPA's diabetes services.

The primary goal of the diabetes services program is to optimize self-management skills and to address clinical management issues for patients with diabetes. GRIPA's CMS staff provides patients with the necessary tools and information to enhance their ability to self-manage their disease and to empower them to become active partners in their overall care. The empowerment approach of establishing individual goals is based on the American Association of Diabetes Educators' 7 self-care behaviors.

CASE IN POINT:

Staffers from GRIPA's diabetes program recently collaborated with a physician's office to help educate a patient who was having difficulty receiving diabetes education. The patient's diabetes was not well-controlled due to numerous patient-specific factors. To accommodate the patient's busy schedule, a GRIPA diabetes educator scheduled a home visit to provide individualized diabetes education. A GRIPA pharmacist also participated by performing a medication review.

Within one month, the patient was in greater compliance with her diabetes regimen, which included medication therapy and lifestyle modification with diet and exercise. The patient's blood sugar levels reached the optimal range.

In addition, the medication review helped provide the patient with a potential prescription cost savings of \$500 per year. The patient has continued telephone follow-up with the diabetes educator every one to two weeks for additional education and support.

If you would like to refer a GRIPA Preferred Care or Wellcare patient to GRIPA's Care Management Services, please call 585-922-1520. For more information on Care Management Services, visit the GRIPA web site at www.gripa.org.

RGPO ELECTS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The following were newly elected to the Rochester General Physicians Organization (RGPO) Board for a three-year term:

Robert Brandon, M.D., Daniel Jacobson, M.D., Zachary Kramer, M.D., Steven Rich, M.D., Lisa Smith, M.D., Joseph Vasile, M.D., M.B.A.

John Genier, M.D. was re-elected to a three-year term.

Other RGPO Board members are:

Pat Riggs, M.D., Rob Thomson, M.D., Mark Davenport, M.D., Marc Eigg, M.D., Eric Ingerowski, M.D., Michael Kukfa, M.D., and Gordon Whitbeck, M.D.

For more information, contact Karen Rettew, Executive Director, Rochester General Physicians Organization/Wayne County Physicians Organization at **585-922-1060**.



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GRIPA Connect Update

ACM LAB RESULTS IN GRIPA CONNECT PORTAL

ACM lab results are now populating the portal. Real-time results began appearing in the portal on July 11, 2007. In the first week of August, GRIPA began back-loading ACM lab results from January 2007.

Just as you already do for ViaHealth Lab results, you'll receive a critical message in your Message Center for any critical lab result from ACM.

Current data sources feeding the portal:

- ViaHealth lab results
- ViaHealth admission, discharge, transfer information
- ACM lab results

In the queue, currently being tested:

- Elizabeth Wende Breast Clinic

In the queue, contracted:

- Rochester Radiology
- ViaHealth inpatient radiology



If you have not signed a Clinical Integration contract or a portal user agreement and want more information, please contact GRIPA Provider Relations at 585-922-1525.

If you need to schedule a training session on how to access the portal, please contact GRIPA Provider Relations at 585-922-1525.