



AMA To Develop National Accreditation Program

Changes in the health care marketplace, including growing demands for physician accountability, have presented the American Medical Association (AMA) and its partners in the Federation with a unique opportunity to create and implement the first "widely accepted" accreditation process for America's more than 600,000 physicians. Through the creation of the American Medical Accreditation Program (AMAP), the medical profession itself will take the responsibility for establishing the national standard of quality for physicians.

The five-part program will review and evaluate the credentials, personal qualifications, environment of care, clinical performance and patient care outcomes of every physician who seeks accreditation. Those who meet the AMAP standards will be designated as "AMAP accredited," recognition that they have met stringent national standards for physician quality. No other organization currently conducts a program of this scope or depth.

The program goal is to offer a stan-

dardized accreditation program that reduces cost to the health care system and hassle to the individual physician. In addition, the program will attempt to decrease inappropriate clinical variation. AMAP will strongly emphasize continuing enhancement of physicians' clinical performance, providing them with information and practical assistance in improving the quality of patient care.

AMAP will become operational in limited areas early in 1997 and will be expanded and phased in over the next 3-5 years. AMAP will be implemented in large measure through collaborative relationships with state and county medical societies and specialty societies. The AMA is looking to collaborate with medical specialty societies in one of three categories: contractual partners for AMAP operations; recognized vendors for AMAP-accepted products or services; or mutual recognition or exchange of data relationships. The AMA has stated that specialty societies with self-assessment

tools that meet the AMAP specifications may be used as evidence of meeting the AMAP standards. The American College of Radiology already has such a program in place (Continuous Professional Improvement), as does the College of American Pathologists.

The Society of Nuclear Medicine's Commission on Health Care Policy and Practice is developing a Continuing Professional Proficiency program in 1997. The Practice Management Committee is currently working on its proposal under the auspices of H. William Strauss, MD, James Fletcher, MD and Conrad Nagle, MD. It is envisioned that this program will meet all AMAP specifications and will be used as the AMAP standard for nuclear medicine physicians.

For more information on AMAP, you may contact Lynn Thomas, Director, Division of Accreditation at (312) 464-4755. If anyone has suggestions/recommendations regarding the SNM's role please e-mail Wendy Smith at wsmith@snm.org.

Commission Takes Reimbursement Seminar 'On The Road'

The Society of Nuclear Medicine's Commission on Health Care Policy and Practice, in cooperation with the Mideastern Chapter, will present its roadshow titled "Reimbursement for Nuclear Medicine Procedures" on Saturday, February 1, 1997, at the Harbor Court Hotel in Baltimore, MD. The seminar will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Speakers include R. Thomas Loughrey, Kenneth A. McKusick, MD, and Darrell W. McIndoe, MD. Registration fees are \$200.00, which includes workbook, case studies, continental breakfast and beverage service.

This course was first presented as a Categorical seminar in Denver at the 1996 SNM Annual Meeting. Due to its considerable success, it is being offered this February in Baltimore. As new information in this rapidly changing field becomes available, updates will be announced at future meetings and in conjunction with the many SNM chapters.

The SNM is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to sponsor continuing medical education for physicians and will offer 6 hours in category 1 credit towards the AMA Physician Recognition Award for the Baltimore session. A maximum of 6 continuing education hours (CEH) will also be available to VOICE participants.

This one-day workshop will cover major procedural aspects of nuclear medicine services including proper code selection, claim submission and documentation. Nuclear medicine physicians, technologists, medical office managers, key billing and medical records personnel will learn how to properly use the current CPT manual and to use HCPCS II for effective coding and billing and to understand third-party payments. They will also be updated on the new editions of CPT and relevant Medicare changes, and be made fully cognizant and

knowledgeable on the current Correct Coding Initiative, and on implications of fraud and abuse for incorrect coding. Participants will review common procedures, fine-tune skills and maximize reimbursement.

Deadline for registration for the meeting is January 31, 1997. For more information or to register, contact Olivia Wong at (703) 708-9000, ext. 250, or via e-mail at owong@snm.org.

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