



Principles for Pay-for-Performance Programs

Physician pay-for-performance (PFP) programs that are designed primarily to improve the effectiveness and safety of patient care may serve as a positive force in our healthcare system. Fair and ethical PFP programs are patient-centered and link evidence-based performance measures to financial incentives. Such PFP programs are in alignment with the following five AMA principles:

- 1. Ensure quality of care** – Fair and ethical PFP programs are committed to improved patient care as their most important mission. Evidence-based quality of care measures, created by physicians across appropriate specialties, are the measures used in the programs. Variations in an individual patient care regimen are permitted based on a physician's sound clinical judgment and should not adversely affect PFP program rewards.
- 2. Foster the patient/physician relationship** – Fair and ethical PFP programs support the patient/physician relationship and overcome obstacles to physicians treating patients, regardless of patients' health conditions, ethnicity, economic circumstances, demographics, or treatment compliance patterns.
- 3. Offer voluntary physician participation** – Fair and ethical PFP programs offer voluntary physician participation, and do not undermine the economic viability of non-participating physician practices. These programs support participation by physicians in all practice settings by minimizing potential financial and technological barriers including costs of start-up.
- 4. Use accurate data and fair reporting** – Fair and ethical PFP programs use accurate data and scientifically valid analytical methods. Physicians are allowed to review, comment and appeal results prior to the use of the results for programmatic reasons and any type of reporting.
- 5. Provide fair and equitable program incentives** – Fair and ethical PFP programs provide new funds for positive incentives to physicians for their participation, progressive quality improvement, or attainment of goals within the program. The eligibility criteria for the incentives are fully explained to participating physicians. These programs support the goal of quality improvement across all participating physicians.