

Sept. 6, 2018: National Advocacy Update

ONC seeks input on EHR quality metrics

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) took its first step towards implementing a much-anticipated provision in the 21st Century Cures Act last week, by issuing a Request for Information (RFI) regarding an Electronic Health Record (EHR) Reporting Program.

This EHR Reporting Program will be part of the newly created Conditions of Certification program, meant to provide physicians and other users information on Certified EHR Technology (CEHRT) performance. The use of CEHRT is a requirement in many Medicare programs, including the Quality Payment Program.

The RFI seeks information on five categories of health IT performance, including: security, interoperability, usability and user-centered design, conformance to certification testing, and "other categories, as appropriate to measure the performance of certified EHR technology." The RFI seeks input on existing metrics related to these categories, as well as how to develop new measures.

The AMA advocated in support of the EHR Reporting Program requirement in the Cures Act. The AMA will submit comments geared at holding EHR vendors accountable for their products' performance and cost. Additionally, the AMA will leverage insight gathered from recent work on EHR usability, conducted in coordination with Pew and Medstar Health (PDF).

New bill would strengthen federal background checks for firearms

The AMA has sent a letter (PDF) expressing support for the "Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2017," which acknowledges that the federal background check system is effective at preventing prohibited purchasers from accessing firearms but it should be extended to other purchase.

The bill would expand the existing background check system to cover all commercial firearm sales, including those at gun shows, over the internet or in classified ads while providing reasonable exceptions for family and friend transfers. The bill would also help to strengthen the National Instant Criminal Background Check System by incentivizing states to improve reporting of prohibited individuals and direct grant funding to states and tribal territories to improve their record-sharing systems.

AMA praises amendment on drug pricing information in DTC ads

The AMA sent a letter (PDF) commending the introduction of a bipartisan amendment to Labor and Health and Human Services funding bill which clarifies that current law authorizes the Food and Drug Administration to require pharmaceutical manufacturers to provide an appropriate disclosure of pricing information for their product in direct-to-consumer advertisements.

It is predicted that this agreement would help to empower patients, promote transparency and ultimately lower prescription drug costs over time. This amendment is keeping in line with the AMA's efforts to advance transparency in the pharmaceutical supply chain.

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