

## **Eli's Rehab Report**

### **News Brief: Medicare Adopts Specialty Pain Management Designation**

On Jan. 1, 2002, CMS began recognizing a new specialty designation for pain management physicians. Although Medicare fees and coverage will be unaffected, adoption of specialty code 72 is a victory for those PM&R practices specializing in pain management. The new designation is significant in that it will track pain management services, which can lead to practice-expense relative value unit changes, since these are developed by Medicare for each recognized specialty. Practice expenses for pain management physicians had been derived from anesthesiology, but this represented a skewed number for those PM&R physicians who are psychiatrists and not anesthesiologists. Some local Medicare carriers have requested that physicians seeking the new pain management specialty designation seek the credentials for its use through form 855I (application for individual healthcare practitioners); other carriers will accept a letter from the physician requesting the designation. Contact your local Medicare carrier for guidelines.