

Eli's Rehab Report

News Briefs: 8 Functional Communication NOMS Measures Get an NQF Thumbs-Up

Speech-language pathologists are getting closer to actively participating in CMS' Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI). The recently passed Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act opened the door for SLPs to participate in PQRI, but CMS must decide on quality measures that an SLP can report.

A step in the right direction: The National Quality Forum (NQF) announced its endorsement of eight Functional Communication Measures (FCMs) related to speech-language pathology rehabilitation of stroke patients, according to an Aug. 5 email announcement from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA).

The FCMs are part of ASHA's National Outcomes Measurement System (NOMS). The FCMs are a series of disorder-specific, seven-point rating scales that help describe the change in an individual's functional communication and swallowing ability over time, ASHA explained. The FCMs the NQF endorsed include writing, swallowing, spoken language expression, spoken language comprehension, reading, motor speech, memory, and attention.

Next step: ASHA plans to work with CMS to recognize the NQF-endorsed FCMs for SLPs to report under PQRI. CMS currently recognizes the NOMS and the FCMs as an appropriate tool for documenting patient improvement related to the therapy cap exceptions process.