

## Eli's Rehab Report

### NEWS BRIEFS: APTA Makes a Move on Practice Expense Rates

Ready for more up-to-date practice expense rates in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule? The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) is going to bat over this issue. In early December, APTA and 18 other health care organizations launched a grassroots and advertising campaign, the Practice Expense Equity Coalition, to push the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement up-to-date practice expense rates -- "without unnecessary intervention by Congress," reports PT Bulletin Online.

"Previously, CMS had been using practice cost data for most physicians and health care professionals that was at least a decade old and failed to capture the relative costs faced by different practices today," **Helene Fearon, PT**, told the Bulletin.

Changes to the 2010 practice expense rates are no guarantee, however, for physical therapists -- the changes may only favor a few groups of health care professionals, Fearon explained. "We are hopeful that Congress will realize that rates based on robust, independently corroborated data should not be second-guessed at this stage of the process."

The good news: CMS, the American Medical Association, and other health care professional groups support the latest survey design and methodology, according to the Bulletin. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and the Government Accounting Office are also backing the initiative for CMS to update data for all specialties.