

Eli's Rehab Report

News Briefs: New Health Care Legislation Keeps Exceptions Hope Afloat

Got your sights on March 31 as your therapy cap exceptions expiration date? The monumental health care reform legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (HR 3590), passed mid-March and offers you more time.

"As a result of our advocacy efforts, HR 3590 contains several provisions that are consistent with APTA priorities," wrote **R. Scott Ward, PT, PhD**, president of the American Physical Therapy Association, in a statement.

Those include:

- An extension of the therapy cap exceptions process through Dec. 31, 2010;
- An extension of the geographic practice cost index floor of 1.0 for 2010, which will help rural providers' reimbursement;
- Authorization of rehabilitation as a required minimum health care benefit as part of the health care insurance exchange; and
- Authorization of a study on different delivery models of physical therapy, including direct access under Medicare, according to Ward's statement.

Not so lucky: The 21.2 percent cut to Medicare Physician Fee Schedule payments slated for April 1, 2010, is still in effect. Your professional associations, however, are continuing to advocate for an extension of the 2009 Medicare pay rate.