

Eli's Rehab Report

News Briefs: PTs in Physician Offices: Prepare for More Pressure

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission just suggested a big crackdown on physician-owned physical therapy services. MedPAC recently released a report recommending that Congress exclude physical therapy services (among other therapeutic services) from the Stark law exception that allows physicians to self refer patients for ancillary services in which they have a financial relationship, according to a press release from the American Physical Therapy Association.

The driving argument to do so is to get a handle on Medicare spending. According to MedPAC's report, physicians with a financial interest in physical therapy tend to initiate therapy more frequently than other physicians as well as provide more visits per patient than non-physician-owned clinics.

MedPAC acknowledged that excluding certain services from the in-office ancillary exception would inconvenience patients by requiring them to receive care in hospitals. However, the organization believes that therapists can provide their services in a variety of other settings that are separate from physician groups. APTA is in full favor of MedPAC's suggestions.