

Eli's Rehab Report

News Flash: New Physician Fee Schedule Rule Brings Therapy Changes for 2008

The good news: Your recertification period will soon be 90 days

A whopping 1,481 pages of Physician Fee Schedule jargon hit the press on Nov. 1 -- and it has a lot that will interest therapists. The 2008 Final [Physician fee schedule](#) Rule carries some good and bad news; here are the highlights in brief.

- Therapists in all settings will have a 90-day recertification period in effect on Jan. 1, 2008. This standard now includes CORF settings, which the proposed rule didn't include last July, says **Rick Gawenda, PT**, director of physical medicine and rehab at Detroit Receiving Hospital and owner of Gawenda Seminars. Currently, therapists follow a 30-day recertification standard.
- Therapy caps will still be in effect in 2008, with a new rate of \$1,810 for PT and SLP combined and \$1,810 for OT.
- Expect a 10.1 percent cut in the 2008 Physician [fee schedule](#) conversion factor. That's a drop from 37.8975 in 2007 to 34.0682 in 2007, Gawenda says.
- CORFs have some new regs to swallow, Gawenda adds. For example, CMS confirmed its statement in the proposed rule that CORF services must relate directly to skilled PT, OT, SLP or respiratory therapy services to be considered covered.
- The physician quality reporting initiative (PQRI) will continue into 2008. And this time, CMS hints that there will be additional quality standards for therapists to report for a bonus.
- Therapist education standards are revised -- but do not take effect until Jan. 1, 2010, Gawenda says.

More to Come

Stay tuned for more details in the next issue of Physical Medicine & Rehab Coding Alert, including Stark Law implications, more on CORFs, and what those new education standards mean for inpatient settings. Meanwhile, to read the final rule, visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PhysicianFeeSchedule/downloads/CMS-1385-FC.pdf>.