The Physicians Advocacy Institute’s Medicare Quality Payment Program (QPP) Physician Education Initiative

Advancing Care Information (ACI) Category Hardships and Reweighting Overview
MEDICARE QPP PHYSICIAN EDUCATION INITIATIVE

ACI Category Hardships and Reweighting Overview

Under the MACRA Quality Payment Program (QPP), physicians may choose to participate in an Advanced Alternative Payment Model (APM) or submit data to the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS).

MIPS is a new program that consolidates and sunsets the previous quality reporting programs, including the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS), Value-based Payment Modifier (VM), and the Electronic Health Records (EHR) Incentive program (Meaningful Use), into one program that builds off these three previous programs and introduces a new category. In 2017, MIPS has four weighted performance categories: quality (60%), cost (0%), advancing care information (25%), and improvement activities (15%).

The Advancing Care Information (ACI) Category is weighted at 25% for the 2017 performance year. This means that an eligible clinician’s score in the ACI category will count for 25% of their final MIPS score across all categories.
However, there are two ways for the ACI category to be reweighted to 0%, and have the 25% from ACI assigned to the quality category. First, CMS may automatically reweight the category for certain eligible clinicians. Second, some eligible clinicians may be able to submit a hardship application for reweighting the category. In these cases, the 25% from the ACI Category would be assigned to the quality category.

The following physicians qualify for automatic reweighting to 0%:

- Hospital-based eligible physicians
- Physicians assistants
- Nurse practitioners
- Clinical nurse specialists
- Certified registered nurse anesthetists
- Physicians who lack face-to-face interaction with patients

Note: reporting the ACI category is optional for these eligible clinicians. However, if the elect to report data for the ACI category, they will be scored.

Physicians can submit an application for reweighting for one of the following hardships:

- Insufficient internet connectivity
- Extreme and uncontrollable circumstances
- Lack of control over the availability of CEHRT

CMS will provide additional information on the application process in coming months on its QPP website: qpp.cms.gov.
If the ACI category is reweighted for either of these reasons, then for 2017, the weights for the four MIPS categories will be: quality (85%), cost (0%), ACI (0%), and improvement activities (15%).

Where can I go for more information?

To learn more about the ACI category, please see the following PAI resources:

- PAI’s QPP Tutorial #3 on the ACI and improvement activities categories, available on the video library page
- 2017 Transition Year ACI Category Overview, available on the MIPS pathway page

Additionally, please review the CMS ACI Performance Category Fact Sheet,¹ and visit the CMS QPP website at https://qpp.cms.gov/ for more information.

¹ https://qpp.cms.gov/docs/QPP_ACI_Fact_Sheet.pdf

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