



APTA FAL Call Briefing Memo

December 2019

APPOINTMENTS: Nominated by APTA, member Kathryn Lucas has been selected to serve on the President's Council on Sports, Fitness and Nutrition Science Board. Her term begins January 1, 2020 and ends December 31, 2021.

DMEPOS: APTA, along with AOTA and ASHT, met with CMS DMEPOS policy staff on November 27. We discussed with CMS staff the application of the 5-year reasonable useful lifetime to low temperature thermoplastic orthoses and provided real-life examples of the types of orthoses that physical therapists and occupational therapists, particularly certified hand therapists, are using in their daily practice. We will be providing CMS with additional information in the coming weeks that will support a lower reasonable useful lifetime for these products.

CMS: APTA submitted comments responding to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) request for information from stakeholders and experts on innovative methods and tools to elevate the agency's program integrity efforts. CMS will use the feedback to better align its program integrity initiatives with the changing health care environment and adopt new and innovative technology. CMS wants specific input on value-based payment programs, Medicare Advantage, prior authorization in Medicare fee for service, and provider education.

CONGRESS: APTA submitted extensive comments in response to the House Ways & Means Committee's Request for Information (RFI) soliciting input that will inform the [Rural and Underserved Communities Health Task Force](#) as it works to develop bipartisan legislation to improve health care outcomes within underserved communities. APTA's comments focused on telehealth, expanding the National Health Service Corp Loan Repayment Program, the need to eliminate copays prior authorization, and other barriers to increase patients' early access to nonpharmacological pain interventions, and concerns about the impact of the proposed fee schedule cuts on patient access in rural areas.

NAIC: APTA attended the fall conference of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). Meetings were held with numerous state's Insurance Commissioners along with AOTA and ASHA to discuss ongoing payment and access issues the three provider groups continue to face with commercial insurance.

CONGRESS: Representatives DeGette (D-CO) and Upton (R-MI) announced they plan to begin work on legislation modernizing patient access and coverage of curative medicines and devices. This effort is a follow-up to the passage of H.R. 34, the *21st Century Cures Act* in the 114th Congress. This new, "Cures 2.0" package will focus on digital health, coverage of new FDA approved products, the use of real world evidence for patient outcomes, as well as improving family and caregiver support systems. APTA is currently preparing comments with specific legislative proposals for consideration, including expanded use of telehealth by PTs under Medicare Advantage plans, certified electronic health records, the role of physical therapists in the pain management, and expansion of locum tenens for PTs.