

January 12, 2023



CRA Membership E-blast

Hello Shanna

The California Rheumatology Alliance remains dedicated to providing updated news and resources to our membership. We appreciate and encourage any feedback to assist in our service to our members. What do YOU want us to talk about? We'd love for these newsletters to be used as an opportunity for us all to learn from each other, so if there's anything specific you're interested in learning more about from other people involved with the California Rheumatology Alliance, let us know by emailing info@calrheum.org.

Visit our Website



2023 CRA MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2022 CRA Annual Membership is open for renewal! Pay your annual dues easily online for exclusive access to special membership benefits such as discounted rates on your meeting registration, tickets for amusement parks, movies, and stage shows as well as curated information surrounding news and policies that directly impact the rheumatology community.

Pay your 2023 CRA Membership Dues now

SAVE THE DATE: 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

SAVE THE DATE

CRA 19TH ANNUAL MEETING

April 28 - 30, 2023
Marina del Rey Marriott
Marina del Rey, CA

More information to come!

2022 MIPS EUC APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

CMS has extended the 2022 MIPS EUC Application deadline to **March 3rd, 2023 8:00 P.M. ET** for individuals, groups, virtual groups, and APM Entities citing COVID-19 as the triggering event. Applying for this hardship allows you to request reweighting for one or more of the MIPS performance categories to 0% using your Quality Payment Program (QPP) Portal account. Your practice will be responsible for maintaining supporting documentation that shows how COVID-19 has impacted your practice for the 2022 performance year.

Please note: CMS is only extending this hardship application deadline for MIPS Eligible clinicians, groups, virtual groups, and APM Entities that are citing COVID-19 as the reason they are unable to collect data for an extended period of time.

If you are approved for this hardship and submit data for 2 or more of MIPS performance categories, you will receive a final MIPS score based on the data that was submitted.

For more information, please review **CMS' 2022 Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Exception Application Guide**. For MIPS eligible clinicians participating as a group, virtual group, APM Entity, or other individuals who were not automatically identified based on their practice's location and have been affected by COVID-19, can apply for the MIPS extreme and uncontrollable circumstances hardship now until March 3rd, 2023 8:00 P.M. ET through your QPP account. Please note, that if you are approved for this hardship but submit data for 2 or more of the MIPS performance categories, you will receive a final score based on the data that was submitted.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

What is new in CRA advocacy:

The Legislature is back in town and the 2023/2024 is just starting to ramp up. The Governor released his proposed budget on January 10th highlighting a deficit of more than \$20 billion. A striking change from the past few years which saw record level surpluses.

One law that went into effect on January 1st requires physicians to provide patients with information on the Open Payments Database. You may recall, this topic was in AB 1278 (Nazarian) which CRA opposed and was able to obtain some amendments which limits the impact on physicians. The details of what is required for physicians is below as taken from a post on the Medical Board of California's website.

New Law Requires Notice to Patients About Open Payments Database

Pursuant to [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 1278](#), physicians are required to provide a notice to their patients regarding the [Open Payments database](#) (Database), which is managed by the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS.

Specifically, this new law requires physicians to do the following beginning **January 1, 2023**:

- At the initial office visit with their patient, a physician must provide either a written or electronic notice of the Database that includes the following text:

"The Open Payments database is a federal tool used to search payments made by drug and device companies to physicians and teaching hospitals. It can be found at <https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov>."

If the physician uses an electronic records system, they must include a record of this notice in the patient's records.

If the physician uses a paper-based records system, then the written notice to the patient must include a signature from the patient (or their representative) and a date of signature. Further, a copy of the written notice must be provided to the patient (or their representative) and included in the patient's records.

- Post a notice regarding the Database at each location where the physician practices, in an area likely to be seen by all persons. That notice must include an internet website link to the Database and the following text:

"For informational purposes only, a link to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Open Payments web page is provided here. The federal Physician Payments Sunshine Act requires that detailed information about payment and other payments of value worth over ten dollars (\$10) from manufacturers of drugs, medical devices, and biologics to physicians and teaching hospitals be made available to the public."

If a physician is employed by a health care employer, that employer is responsible for meeting this requirement.

Beginning **January 1, 2024**, a physician who uses a website in their medical practice must conspicuously post the same notice described above in 2) on their website. If a physician is employed by a health care employer, that employer is responsible for meeting this requirement.

Under this law, a violation of these requirements constitutes unprofessional conduct. The requirements created by this law do not apply to a physician working in a hospital emergency room.

For additional information, please see the text of [AB 1278](#).

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, CRA is preparing for our advocacy agenda for 2023 which looks to be another busy one. CRA is co-sponsoring legislation with the Hemophilia Council of California and Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute to address the growing problems with accumulator programs being put in place by health plans. These accumulator programs restrict a patient from using amounts provided to them through co-pay assistance programs to count towards the patient's out of pocket health insurance requirements. We are currently speaking with a few Legislators about authoring the bill idea so at this point there is no bill number.

We are asking CRA members to share patient stories related to problems with accumulator programs. If you have any patient stories or are interested in learning more about CRA advocacy efforts, please email Tim Madden at madden@mqadvocacy.com or Shanna Castro at susui@calrheum.org

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