



December FAL Call Minutes

December 17, 2025, 8:00 PM ET

The Zoom recording can be accessed here: <https://apta-org.zoom.us/rec/share/COwAV7vvpwL8P8dxBn8nhGuzM6FfvX6jNelv5H9-JDNebwGgb89oqeIJGeh4vOi.4iuBFHvoIQME78pZ?startTime=1766019665000>

Regulatory Update

Finalized Home Health Payment Rule: CMS finalized a significantly smaller cut to home health payments than originally proposed, reducing payments by 1.3% (\$220 million) for 2026. This was a major improvement from the proposed 6.4% cut and reflects CMS agreement with stakeholder comments.

Behavioral Adjustment Changes: CMS declined to apply behavioral adjustments for calendar years 2023–2025 due to the inability to directly link observed changes to PDGM implementation. As a result, the permanent adjustment was reduced from 3.7% to 0.9%, and the temporary adjustment from 4.6% to 2.7%. CMS indicated it will continue reviewing data through 2026 to assess whether future behavioral adjustments are necessary. While not explicit, CMS implied that additional adjustments may ultimately be unnecessary.

Quality Reporting Program (QRP) and Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) Program Updates: CMS finalized the removal of four social determinants of health items and one COVID-19 vaccination measure from OASIS starting in 2026. For 2026, CMS finalized three OASIS-based M1800 measures related to bathing and dressing. CMS acknowledged stakeholder preference for Section GG measures and indicated openness to transitioning in the future.

Grassroots Update

APTA Capitol Hill Day 2026: Capitol Hill Day 2026 will be held April 19–21 at the Hilton Washington, D.C. Capitol Hill, within walking distance of Capitol Hill, with registration opening in early 2026. The schedule will be expanded: attendees arrive Sunday with the PTPAC party that evening, participate in advocacy education and issue briefings on Monday, and conduct Hill visits on Tuesday. In even-numbered years, priority Key Contacts receive funding to attend Capitol Hill Day, while FALs receive free registration but not travel funding. Funded Key Contacts will be selected based on the Key Contact list and whether their members of Congress serve on health care committees, which may result in some states having more funded attendees and some having none.

FAL Appointments for 2026: FAL appointments for 2026 must be completed by December 19. Appointments are made by component leadership and must be confirmed through APTA's centralized system. Do not wait until CSM to finalize selections.

2026 FAL Call Schedule and Survey: Next year's FAL meetings will continue on the last Wednesday of each month, except for November and December due to holidays. A brief survey on your experience is available; please submit your feedback by December 31.

PTPAC Update

PTPAC Contribution Update: PTPAC participation increased across the APTA Advocacy Network, with 79% of FALs contributing (up 4%), 47% of key contacts contributing (up 3%), and overall grassroots participation exceeding 15%. Continued growth was encouraged before year-end to strengthen advocacy access. PTPAC contributions provide essential access to members of Congress, as APTA dues cannot be used for political fundraising.

Upcoming CSM Engagement: If you're attending the 2026 APTA CSM, consider attending the PTPAC event on Friday, February 13 and visit the PTPAC booth in the exhibit hall.

Congressional Update

ACA Premium Tax Credit Update: Expanded ACA premium tax credits are set to expire January 1, as the House-passed GOP healthcare package does not address them. Although a discharge petition reached the required signatures to force consideration, leadership is not required to act this year, making a lapse likely.

Student Loan Rule Proposal Overview: The Department of Education's proposed rule would reclassify PT degrees as graduate rather than professional, significantly lowering federal loan limits. This would reduce the lifetime borrowing cap from \$200,000 to \$100,000 and the annual cap from \$50,000 to \$20,500. APTA is a founding member of the Alliance for Healthcare Access and Workforce Development and has submitted formal comments opposing the proposal. Advocacy efforts include meetings with Congress and the Department of Education to highlight concerns about workforce impacts.

The next FAL call will be Wednesday, January 28 at 8:00 p.m. ET.