

JGAC APTA Home Health & APTA Geriatrics Meeting Agenda

Date: 12/11/2025

Time: 8:30-9:33 PM

Attendees: Eva Norman, Ellen Strunk, Steven Osovsky, Silke Mildenberger, Kevin Cezat, Jamie Kuettel

APTA Staff/Liaisons: Rachel Miller (APTA), Jon Vega (APTA Geriatrics)

II. Congressional & Regulatory Update – Rachel Miller

CMS CY 2026 Home Health Final Rule Overview

Key Context for Behavioral Adjustments

CMS acknowledged difficulty isolating provider behavior changes attributable solely to PDGM due to multiple overlapping policy changes after 2022, including:

- Recalibration of PDGM case-mix weights and LUPA thresholds
- ICD-10 code reassessments affecting PDGM clinical groupings
- Implementation of **OASIS-E (2023)**
- Expansion of **Home Health Value-Based Purchasing (HHVBP)**
- Increased **Medicare Advantage** penetration in home health

Because of these confounding variables, CMS:

- Limited behavioral analysis to **2020-2022 data**
- Reduced the **permanent behavioral adjustment** from **3.7% (proposed) to 0.9% (final)**
- Indicated adjustments may be revisited when **2026 claims data** becomes available

Temporary Behavioral Adjustment for CY 2026

- Proposed temporary cut: **4.6%**
- Finalized temporary cut: **2.7%**
- Net CY 2026 impact: **1.3% payment reduction**
- Final 30-day payment rate for 2026: **\$2,038.22** (down from \$2,057.35 in 2025)

Quality Reporting Program (QRP) Updates

CMS finalized removal of four assessment items:

- Living situation
- Food
- Utilities
- COVID-19 vaccination

Additional CMS insights:

- Limited support for interoperability due to technology and cost barriers
- Preference for **maintenance-focused cognitive measures**, not improvement-based
- RFIs are used to inform future policymaking, not responded to directly

Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) Updates

- Finalized **OASIS M1800-based functional measures**:
 - Bathing
 - Upper body dressing
 - Lower body dressing
- CMS acknowledged stakeholder preference for **Section GG** items and stated possible future consideration

Other Finalizations

- Functional status level changes under PDGM
- Clarifications to **face-to-face encounter documentation**
- Largest change from proposed to final rule remains reduction in behavioral adjustments

Key Takeaway:

CY 2026 includes a payment cut, but it is **significantly smaller than originally proposed**, reflecting CMS's acknowledgment of attribution challenges.

III. Education for Members

a. Articles – Ellen

- Discussion of **topic ideas** for newsletters and quarterly reports

- Need identified for **volunteers** to write newsletter articles for **December and January**
- Question raised about whether upcoming outreach should focus on **members contacting Congress regarding extension or resolution of ACA tax credits**
- Action Item: Ask Justin Elliott for article ideas/messaging for January issues - Eva

b. Thinkific – Ellen/Jon Vega

- Update provided on APTA Geriatrics **Thinkific education platform**
- Advocacy and payment policy communities highlighted and we were shown how to access: <https://aptageriatrics.thinkific.com/>
- Volunteers requested to assist with posting and content updates

c. Task Force Updates – Eva

i. Telehealth & Digital Care Policy Task Force

- Leads: **Kevin Cezat & Steve Osovsky**
- Ongoing monitoring of telehealth policy developments
- Emphasis on regulatory alignment and advocacy messaging

ii. Payment Reform & Value-Based Care Task Force

- Lead: **Amy Hedrick**
- Amy not in attendance.
- Action Item: Ellen to follow up with Amy regarding the proposed Charter.

IV. Advocacy & Communications Update – Eva

a. Website Content & Updates

- Discussion of advocacy-related website content
- Emphasis on keeping materials current and actionable for members
- APTA Geriatrics website will be completed no later than Q2.

b. Key Contact Recruitment

- Discussion on expanding and strengthening **Key Contact** participation
- Noted that **20,000–22,000 advocacy emails** have already been sent through the APTA Patient Action Center

- Volunteer requested to lead the group

V. Open Forum

- Meeting adjourned with agenda was completed.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Eva Norman, PT, DPT