



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Administrator
Washington, DC 20201

SEP 26 2006

Mr. Craig Jeffries
Executive Director
American Association of Ambulatory Surgery Centers
P.O. Box 5271
Johnson City, TN 37602-5271

Dear Mr. Jeffries: *Craig*

Thank you for your letter regarding the progress of the Ambulatory Surgery Centers' (ASC) Quality Collaboration in its development of performance measures and quality improvement programs. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) believes physician and administrative leadership such as yours is required in order to reform the American health-care system in a manner that leads to better outcomes and higher quality.

It is good to learn that the ASC has expanded its leadership role by bringing together associations and related organizations in the pursuit of increased awareness and focus on performance measures and quality improvement. As the ASC Quality Collaboration continues to channel its performance measurement and public reporting activities through leadership projects, CMS believes coordination between the public and private sectors will be maintained.

The CMS is committed to working in a collaborative manner with stakeholders and measure developers in order to achieve the right balance that will lead to quality improvement and physician accountability. Thus, CMS will continue to look towards consensus processes, such as the Ambulatory Care Quality Alliance (AQA) and the National Quality Forum, to finalize measure sets that are appropriate for implementation. For example, as part of this measurement development process, the American Medical Association Physicians Consortium for Performance Improvement and the National Committee for Quality Assurance made available a set of preoperative care measures for public comment from July 10 through August 4. At the conclusion of the public comment period, the AQA will review the measures for endorsement.

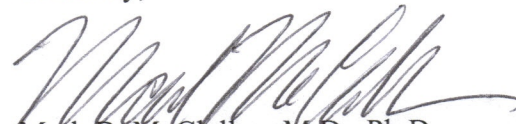
In addition, CMS participated in the AQA meeting on August 10, in Chicago, Illinois, in order to review the measure development activity and work with specialty societies to establish clarity on the process for measure endorsement. We believe you will find this process satisfactory as a vehicle to clarify any issues you may need to address.

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In the interim, we always welcome open communication with you on these matters. Please contact Dr. Barry Straube or Dr. Trent Haywood at (410) 786-6841 with any questions you may have or if you would like to schedule a meeting. Please share this information with the cosigners of your letter.

*we look forward
to enhancing our
collaborations*

Sincerely,



Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D.