

# Standardized Reporting to Achieve Higher Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Scores

Can the Use of Standardized Reporting Improve the Quality of Patient Care?

# Authors

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# Purpose

In 2015, Medicare Accessibility and Chip Reauthorization Act (MACRA) was signed into law. It is a method of payment that incentivizes value and quality over volume. Under MACRA, the center for Medicare and Medicaid services reimburses through two different tracks: the merit-based incentive payment system (MIPS), which is what most radiology groups will fall under and the bundled payment model.

The purpose of our submission is to illustrate why standardized reporting would be beneficial to patient care how it could improve the patient experience.

# Materials/Methods

We conducted an in-depth review of numerous publications on the implementation and utilization of standardized reporting to demonstrate why it is superior to traditional prose reporting and how it can be used to increase quality performance.

We defined a structured report as a report consisting of two columns, the left representing the heading and the right representing corresponding pertinent patient information such as the reason for study and technique or the findings on the exam.

# Clinician Preference

Overwhelmingly, clinicians view a structured report as superior to the traditional prose report. The most common reasons cited were ease of interpretation and extraction of information.

Even though radiologists are trained to interpret the study in its entirety, a detailed list of what was examined provides reassurance that every organ system contained within the study was appropriately evaluated. Clinicians seemed to value measurements of abnormalities and pertinent negatives, in addition to positive findings in evaluation of the organs of interest.

# Improving Patient Care

Structured reports provide a clear, concise itemized report of the findings without the clinicians having to sift through paragraphs of verbose prose. The structured report helps prevent vague descriptions and provides an itemized checklist to ensure all relevant organ systems were re-evaluated on follow up exams, preventing inattention related errors. Multiple studies have shown that in classic prose reports, pertinent information was occasionally omitted.

The ease of interpretation should allow clinicians to make more definitive treatment decisions and improve communication between radiologists and referring clinicians. A study by Lawrence et al. concluded a statistically significant increase in content and clarity satisfaction of radiology reports composed in the structured format.

# Improving Patient Experience

Many of the 2018 suggested radiology MIPS Improvement Activities center around improving patient satisfaction and patient engagement.

In the modern electronic medical era, patients readily have access to their medical records. Traditional prose reporting often contains lengthy paragraphs of information which is hard to follow and understand, especially for complex exams. Even though patients may not comprehend the report in its entirety, the itemized structure will allow them to find the relevant organ structure and relate it to the final impression. This should facilitate more in-depth discussions with the referring provider and the patient, allowing for more intimate involvement of patients and their own care.

# Conclusion

Interpretation and communication of information is the centerpiece of radiology. Structured reports, favored by the vast majority of clinicians, would improve the dissemination of information by providing clear, concise reports.

In this age of modern medicine where patients readily have access to their imaging studies and reports, structured reports would provide clarity and could help facilitate patient understating and involvement in their medical care.

# Further Additions

Appropriate follow-up examinations are the cornerstone of the 2018 Radiology MIPS measures.

A section under the impression should be added to include follow-up exams based on the ACR appropriateness criteria. This would help prevent unnecessary exams, thus decreasing radiation exposure and keep costs down, as well as benefit patient outcomes if followed appropriately.

# References

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