

## READER QUESTIONS

Some therapists also use neuromuscular re-education (97112) if they're working on balance or proprioception with the patient.

If you simply taped the arch and educated the patient perhaps on how to tape it himself and provided no other skilled intervention such as therapeutic exercise or neuro-

muscular re-education, the appropriate CPT code to bill would be 29540 (*Strapping of the ankle/foot*).

— *Reader Questions were answered by Rick Gawenda, PT, director of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Detroit Receiving Hospital.* ■

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Legislation

#### Congress Extends Therapy Cap Exceptions Process

You can breathe a sigh of relief that Congress has decided to extend the therapy cap exceptions process beyond 2006.

Congress passed H.R. 6111, the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006, which includes language to extend the therapy cap exceptions process for one year, as authorized by the Deficit Reduction Act. Even better, the act freezes the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule at 2006 levels, putting the scheduled 5.1 percent cut in the conversion factor on hold.

**Final step: President Bush** signed the legislation into law on Dec. 20, making it good to go.

In addition to freezing the fee schedule rate at 2006 levels, Congress also authorized a 1.5 percent bonus for eligible providers who report quality measures, according to the **American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA)**. "Because of outcomes measures developed by ASHA, speech-language pathologists (SLP) are specifically defined as eligible for the bonus beginning in 2008."

Last, but not least, the legislation includes a one-year extension for CY 2007 of the minimum 1.0 floor in the Geographic Practice Cost Index (GPCI) under the fee schedule. "This reverses a scheduled reduction in payment to the 51 rural localities where the GPCI is below 1.0," according to the **American Physical Therapy Association**.

### Outcomes

#### PTPN Selects FOTO System To Track Patient Progress

With all that's in the news regarding therapy caps, you don't want to forget that your payers want to focus more on outcomes and pay-for-performance.

Independent therapist private practice network **PTPN** hasn't forgotten and has announced plans to launch a national rehabilitation outcomes program in 2007.

The initiative will allow PTPN providers and its payers to track and quantify the success of their treatments. "Our new outcomes program is designed to measure improvement in a patient's function and to compare our providers' performance against national benchmarks," says PTPN President and CEO **Michael Weinper, MPH, PT**.

PTPN has selected Focus On Therapeutic Outcomes Inc. (**FOTO**) as the engine for the outcomes initiative. The FOTO software system measures outcomes for a wide range of rehabilitation patients, using assessment instruments that track patient progress and functional improvement.

All of PTPN's approximately 1,200 member provider offices will be participating in the initiative by the end of 2007.

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