

January 16, 2019

**RE: American Vein and Lymphatic Society ACP-Improving Wisely Quality Collaborative Quality Improvement Project: Data Report Notifications**

Dear Venous Clinician Colleagues:

The American Vein and Lymphatic Society (formerly American College of Phlebology), has partnered with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine on an initiative called *Improving Wisely* for the purpose of Quality Improvement. I wanted to take a moment to announce that confidential Individual Data Reports are now being mailed to many venous providers across the country.

The AVLS committee leading this project has developed several metrics that address important practice issues in vein care. Using NPI numbers from Medicare claims data, the *Improving Wisely* team has prepared a 2017 provider-specific confidential performance reports. This information exists in the public domain. These reports are being confidentially mailed during the month of January.

The initial phase of this initiative will evaluate the average number of venous ablation procedures performed on each patient by each provider. Only those who perform more than 10 ablations per year on Medicare beneficiaries will receive reports of their performance that will come from Improving Wisely by US mail in an envelope that will have the AVLS logo and the words *Improving Wisely Quality Collaborative*. We will also provide the national averages and standard deviations for this metric to allow providers to compare their personal utilization rates with those of all providers in the Medicare program.

Similar collaborations between Improving Wisely and other societies assessing different metrics have demonstrated the value of informing physicians of their practice resource utilization and those of the national average. It has been observed that variability of performance becomes less broad when providers can compare their performance with that of providers nationally. Physicians in other medical specialties that have utilized *Improving Wisely* have provided very positive feedback with regard to the educational benefit of learning how their performance compares with other providers.

The AVLS and the Improving Wisely team are committed to keeping this data strictly *confidential* as its intended purpose is solely for self-improvement. Although the raw data is drawn from the public domain, the only individuals who have access to the personal level data with regard to the metrics being analyzed is the Johns Hopkins group and they are not allowed to discuss personal level data. The personal data will not be available to AVLS volunteers involved in the project (who have signed agreements to this effect) or any patient, peer provider, CMS or insurance company. As data collected in the context of quality improvement, these results are not legally discoverable and have no implications for licensure, board certification, membership, or any other credentialing.

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The AVLS's Physician Engagement Committee is a small group that will be available for mentorship and education to support quality improvement for members and non-members. On the AVLS website, a project home page open to everyone will be active that will curate frequently asked questions, general project documents, national level data, and project milestones on Improving Wisely. This will be at: <http://www.phlebology.org/member-resources/improving-wisely>

In 2019, the AVLS Improving Wisely team will send additional report on the same metric utilizing updated Medicare data to allow physicians to track changes in their performance for quality improvement purposes. We hope to continue this annually and to also analyze and report additional metrics in the future.

**Be on the lookout for the envelope with your personal data report.** It will be sent to the address linked to your NPI number that CMS reflects for you.

A research manuscript is also being prepared on the overall national data. This manuscript will be submitted for publication consideration shortly to a national professional journal, as well as posted on the website noted above.

The AVLS is delighted to launch this project which represents one of our major investments for the period 2018-2020. Please feel free to contact me, or our AVLS Improving Wisely *Physician Engagement Committee* Chair, Dr. Margaret Mann, if you have any questions or comments via our AVLS staff Director of Health Care Policy & Advocacy, Robert White. Robert's email is [rwhite@acpmail.org](mailto:rwhite@acpmail.org), and his direct line is (703) 973-2465.

We hope that those of you who receive this data find it useful in benchmarking your practice patterns with those of our peers.

Warm Regards,



Marlin W. Schul, MD, MBA, RVT, FACPh  
President, American Vein and Lymphatic Society