

The American Health Quality Association

The American Health Quality Association (AHQA) is the membership organization representing the national network of Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) and professionals dedicated to improving health care delivery and patient safety.

QIOs provide integrated expertise in clinical care, quality improvement, health information management, statistical analysis, and communications to health care purchasers and providers. Thousands of practicing physicians support the work of QIOs by providing organizational leadership and clinical expertise.

QIOs and individual AHQA members lead change through collaboration with medical practices, hospitals, health plans, long-term care facilities, home health agencies, and employers to evaluate health care delivery patterns, identify opportunities for improvement, and share best practices.

AHQA members are active not only in major urban centers, but also in rural settings, and in the improvement of care for disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities. AHQA members develop and conduct projects in quality improvement and evaluation for Medicare, Medicaid, and private payers and purchasers.

Quality projects in hospitals often focus on high impact areas such making surgery safer and improving treatment systems for heart disease, heart attacks, and pneumonia. In outpatient settings, QIOs are working with physicians to adopt and effectively use health information technology, improve treatment for diabetes, and promote higher rates of flu and pneumonia immunization and cancer

screening. Quality projects in nursing homes target bed sores, pain management, rehabilitation services, and an increased focus on making care more resident-oriented and less institutional.

In addition, QIOs conduct external reviews in response to appeals and grievances filed by Medicare beneficiaries and Medicaid recipients. They also contract privately with large employers to provide independent review services.

"I consider QIOs to be one of the great yet untapped resources in health care... They are the front field force of leading change in practices across the United States."

*David Brailer, MD, PhD
National Coordinator
for Health Information Technology*

AHQA regularly works with lawmakers, health care providers, purchasers and consumers to advocate the policies of the Association and to gain support and visibility for the goals and accomplishments of its members.

AHQA maintains a close working relationship with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Quality Forum, major professional medical and health care associations, and the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission—serving as an educational resource and partner on projects.