

QIOs to Improve Prescription Drug Therapy

Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) will work under 2005-2008 contracts to Medicare to improve outpatient prescription drug therapy under the new Medicare prescription drug benefit.

Mandated by Section 109 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA), QIOs are required to offer quality improvement assistance to Medicare providers, practitioners, prescription drug plans (PDPs) and Medicare Advantage prescription drug plans (MA-PDs).

QIOs will work with drug plans and providers on quality improvement projects that focus on improving prescribing and safety in the delivery of prescription medications.

Quality improvement projects will begin in August 2006. Before then, QIOs will conduct outreach to educate PDPs and MA-PDs on the role of QIOs in quality improvement and plan quality improvement projects that will focus on:

- **Improving prescribing, with an emphasis on assisting physician practices that use or are adopting e-prescribing.** Projects under this option will focus on avoiding the use of certain medications in the elderly, identifying and reducing clini-

cally significant drug interactions, and avoiding duplicate medications.

- **Improving patient self-management through medication therapy management services (MTMS).** Projects under this option will focus on improving medication therapy management services, including improvement in patients' understanding of medications and potential side effects.
- **Improving disease specific therapy** using integrated Medicare Parts A, B and D data. Projects under this option will focus on avoiding specific medications in patients who have certain diseases or who take medications requiring therapeutic monitoring.

QIOs may also work on projects that address potentially significant issues in medication therapy. For example, QIOs might undertake projects that focus on improving management of medication therapy across settings, such as from hospital discharge to home.

The American Health Quality Association is dedicated to improving the safety and effectiveness of health care. AHQA represents the national network of Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) that work with hospitals, medical practices, health plans, long-term care facilities, home health agencies, and employers to encourage the spread of best clinical practices and improve systems of care delivery.