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QIO Program 2021 Yearly Summary

January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021



**Quality Improvement
Organizations**

Sharing Knowledge. Improving Health Care.
CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

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A Message from Leadership

Health systems and patients across the country are now entering a new reality almost 3 years after the start of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique set of challenges to quality and safety in health care institutions across the country, introducing uncertainty and new information much faster than the system could handle and apply. As our collective experience and scientific evidence changed, so did the recommendations and guidelines from regulatory agencies. Interestingly enough, and certainly a validation of the critical role we play, the thing that kept health facilities in a place where they could manage the pandemic bravely and innovatively, was their implementation of the QI process on a daily basis. Their response to the pandemic required a dynamic, rapid cycle, plan-do-study-act approach, thereby leaving them no choice but to implement the principles of QI, whether it was patient triage, use of Personal Protective Equipment, procuring supplies, testing, visitation, managing the workforce or complying with guidance.



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In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an enormous impact on the entire health care system. In addition to CMS' ongoing efforts to increase COVID-19 infection prevention and control, vaccinations and boosters, the Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organizations (QIN-QIOs) and Hospital Quality Improvement Contractors (HQICs) Program partnered with health care providers to strengthen infection control systems, manage and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, reduce opioid misuse and improve patient safety and care coordination.

As directed by CMS, our Quality Improvement contractors provided technical assistance and education to 1,961 primarily small, rural, critical access hospitals, 11,179 nursing homes, and 519 community partnerships across the country to implement quality improvement and patient safety initiatives. In 2021, good progress was made in reducing adverse drug events, increasing patient safety and care coordination, improving resident function in nursing homes, and addressing the needs of nursing home residents and staff related to COVID-19 infection prevention and vaccinations.

All of this would not have been possible without the integrated and coordinated approach used by CMS, and all of our Quality Improvement Contractors, in engaging with national and local stakeholders, provider associations, patient advocacy groups, health department entities at the state and local levels, and our federal and private sector colleagues. Edwards Deming famously said that "Quality is everyone's responsibility." It took a committed network of dedicated, mission-focused partners to realize good outcomes, and improvements in quality and safety for the people we serve.

We are proud of the work completed throughout 2021. Especially important were efforts to reduce harm from COVID-19 through improved infection prevention practices and vaccination. We look forward to continuing this work in 2022 and the years beyond.

How We Help People with Medicare

Led by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) Program works with health care providers and local and tribal communities to improve health care quality, access, value and equity for people with Medicare. This effort is carried out through five initiatives:



Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organizations (QIN-QIOs) work directly with nursing homes, health care providers and Partnerships for Community Health (formerly community coalitions) serving rural and underserved areas to improve the quality and safety of care for people with Medicare.



Hospital Quality Improvement Contractors (HQICs) work directly with small, rural, critical access and some urban hospitals to improve health care quality and safety for people with Medicare.



The American Indian/Alaska Native Healthcare Quality Initiative (AIANHQI) supports 25 small, rural and critical access hospitals and those that partner with tribal communities through the Indian Health Service.



The Opioid Prescriber Safety and Support (OPSS) initiative that provides national outreach and education to eligible providers to promote safe opioid prescribing practices and spread knowledge of non-opioid pain management therapies.



Beneficiary & Family Centered Care-Quality Improvement Organizations (BFCC-QIOs) help people with Medicare, their families and caregivers exercise their right to high-quality health care. [Learn more about BFCC-QIOs](#) or [click here](#) to locate the BFCC-QIO in your area.

Many Quality Programs, Common Goals

The QIO Program's initiatives address health care challenges and reduce disparities to achieve these goals:



By the Numbers

Under the direction of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the QIO Program partnered with health care providers in 2021 to reduce opioid misuse, improve patient safety and care coordination, and increase COVID-19 infection prevention and control, vaccinations and boosters.*

Initiative Highlights



Outcomes



Behavioral Health and Opioid Utilization and Misuse

The QIO Program helps health care providers implement evidence-based practices for pain management and opioid use to decrease adverse drug events and deaths.

QIN-QIOs and HQICs work nationwide with hospitals, nursing homes and Partnerships for Community Health to decrease opioid adverse drug events (ADEs) among people with Medicare.

10%

Reduction in opioid ADEs among patients treated at enrolled hospitals

24%

Reduction in opioid ADEs among people with Medicare served by enrolled Partnerships for Community Health

15%

Reduction in opioid ADEs among long-stay residents in enrolled nursing homes



Patient Safety

The QIO Program helps nursing homes and hospitals establish processes and implement evidence-based practices to prevent adverse drug events and reduce readmissions.

QIN-QIOs and HQICs work nationwide with hospitals, nursing homes and Partnerships for Community Health to help prevent hospital-acquired infections like *Clostridioides difficile infection* (CDI). Enrolled hospitals, nursing homes and Partnerships for Community Health have significantly reduced CDI events since 2018.

28%

Reduction in hospital utilization for CDI among people with Medicare served by enrolled Partnerships for Community Health

30%

Reduction in hospital utilization for CDI among long-stay residents in enrolled nursing homes

14%

Reduction in CDI among patients treated at enrolled hospitals



Care Coordination

The QIO Program helps health care providers develop processes to better coordinate care and improve communication with post-acute providers, people with Medicare and their families.

QIN-QIOs and HQICs work with hospital leaders, clinical teams and community partners to refine care coordination processes to reduce unplanned hospital admissions.

21%

Reduction in 30-day readmissions (per 1,000 Medicare beneficiaries) served by enrolled Partnerships for Community Health

38%

Reduction of hospital utilization for people with Medicare who have complex health needs (per 1,000 beneficiaries) residing in enrolled Partnerships for Community Health

3%

Reduction in the percentage of 30-day readmissions for enrolled hospitals

6%

Decrease in emergency department visits among long-stay residents in enrolled nursing homes

15%

Decrease in hospitalizations among long-stay residents in enrolled nursing homes



Nursing Homes/Long-Term Care

The QIO Program helps nursing homes improve their overall Five-Star Quality Rating and quality measure ratings on clinical measures for resident care.

In the nursing home setting, hospitalizations per 1,000 long-stay resident days declined by 20%. Other improvements were made in several patient harm measures.

21%

Increase of short-stay residents who made improvements in function

25%

Decrease of long-stay residents who have or had a catheter inserted and left in their bladder

17%

Decrease of long-stay residents with a urinary tract infection (UTI)



COVID-19

The QIO Program helps deliver timely information to health care providers about COVID-19 regulations and guidance. The Program also addresses their pressing needs such as overcoming vaccine hesitancy, encouraging vaccine and booster uptake and building resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on the entire health care system. The effects are especially felt in nursing homes. The medically vulnerable nature of the nursing home population, combined with the inherent risks of congregate living in a health care setting, have required aggressive and detailed efforts to limit COVID-19 exposure. QIN-QIOs have helped nursing homes increase vaccination rates for their residents and staff.

87%

Nursing home residents received a primary series of the COVID-19 vaccine as of January 2, 2022

81%

Nursing home staff received a primary series of the COVID-19 vaccine as of January 2, 2022

[*Learn more here](#)

Work in Action

Below you will find stories demonstrating how the QIO Program, led by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), works directly with providers and communities, tools that help providers establish processes that improve care and educational resources for providers and people with Medicare.

COVID-19:

The QIO Program helps deliver timely information to health care providers about COVID-19 regulations and guidance. The Program also addresses providers' pressing needs such as overcoming vaccine hesitancy, encouraging vaccine and booster uptake and building resilience.



Alliant Health Solution's One-on-One Support with Nursing Homes Increases COVID-19 Vaccination Rates for Residents and Staff

Alliant Health Solutions (Alliant) leveraged one-on-one support and customized intervention strategies to improve resident COVID-19 vaccination rates and exceed state average rates.



COVID-19 Response Series: Innovations from the Field Series 1

The first video series in the Compass HQIC *Innovations from the Field* project follows the stories of nine rural hospitals and highlights some of their successes, lessons learned and innovations big and small.



Improving Vaccine Uptake Among Nursing Home Staff Through Motivational Interviewing Techniques

Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG) developed Motivational Interviewing tools including a webinar, tip sheets, and videos to help nursing homes improve uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine.



Behind the Scenes of the Nursing Home Command Center

The Nursing Home Command Center was formed in November 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to bring Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) data analysts, the Independent Evaluation Contractor (IEC) and CMS leadership together to review the data that drives decisions about nursing home infection control/quality improvement.



COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

This tool provided by Quality Insights with information collected from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), outlines seven frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and booster.

Health Equity and Reducing Disparities:

The QIO Program works to identify, address, track and reduce health care disparities among people with Medicare.



One Hospital's Journey to a Culture of Health Equity: Lessons Learned from a Rural Community

Alliant, Compass, IPRO and Telligen HQICs join together in an exciting presentation about a robust health equity initiative in a rural health system that strategically overlapped with hospital operations and focused on the quality and patient safety program.



Quality and Health Equity During a Pandemic

Comagine elevated their health equity work with the American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN) community during the pandemic and beyond, promoting a more comprehensive approach to quality which considers the whole person, the whole family, and the whole community.



COVID-19 Vaccination Huddles

Comagine Partnership to Advance Tribal Health (PATH) created a series of 30-minute huddles with curated timely content on vaccinations and patient safety.

Patient and Family Engagement:

The QIO Program seeks out the values and preferences of people with Medicare, their families, their caregivers and their advocates and integrates these perspectives into quality improvement activities.



Readmissions Care Partner Sprint Syllabus

The Readmission Care Partner sprint, provided by EQIC, allows hospitals to engage in an improvement project focused on the development or enhancement of their care partner program.



The Roadmap to Success: Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC)

HSAG developed a Roadmap to Implementing a PFAC tool to systematically guide hospitals through the process of implementing and maintaining a successful PFAC and includes best-practice tools and resources to assist hospitals in that process.



The Value of the Lived Experience of Front Line Caregivers, Patients and Families in Reducing Hospital-Associated Harm

After years of steady improvement in hospital-acquired conditions, the COVID-19 pandemic brought hospitalization surges, staffing shortages, and family visitation limits that worsened patient outcomes. Convergence, a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospital Quality Improvement Contractor (HQIC), set out to better understand what contributed to the rise in hospital-associated harm at the beginning of the pandemic and how such harms could be prevented in the future.

Behavioral Health and Opioid Utilization and Misuse:

The QIO Program helps health care providers implement evidence-based practices for pain management and opioid use to decrease adverse drug events and deaths.



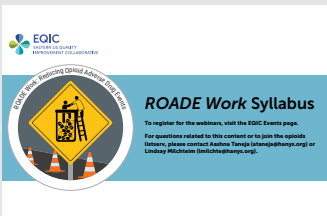
Opioid Interventions in Nursing Homes and Partnership for Community Health

IPRO conducted a Nursing Home Naloxone Assessment to gain a better understanding of the use of naloxone, and developed an educational webinar, learning modules, and a publicly available Opioid Utilization Dashboard that provides state- and county-level mapping of opioid utilization using Medicare data.



Compass Opioid Stewardship Program Expert Spotlight and Podcast

The IHC Compass Opioid Stewardship Program developed an expert spotlight interview series and a podcast on essential topics in opioid prescribing best practices.



ROADE Work Syllabus

EQIC developed a syllabus for its ROADE Work series, a comprehensive and strategic approach in the opioid adverse drug event initiative, comprised of a series of six webinars.

Patient Safety:

The QIO Program helps nursing homes and hospitals establish processes and implement evidence-based practices to prevent adverse drug events and infections and reduce readmissions.



Collaborating with Hospitals Through Group Email Discussion List

Telligen leveraged Gagggle Mail technology to facilitate peer-to-peer connections with quality improvement leaders and hospital personnel across 200 hospitals and to promote an all ask, all answer, all learn environment.



Behind the Scenes of the Compass HQIC Strategy

The Compass Network developed a successful comprehensive strategy to reach and recruit its primarily rural and critical access hospitals and ensure targeted and timely interventions effect lasting change.

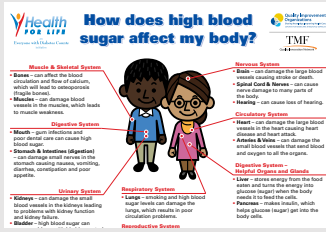


Behind the Scenes of Project Firstline

Great Plains Quality Innovation Network (Great Plains QIN) and Project Firstline Leads in South Dakota are working together to help prevent, mitigate and respond to infections through education, resource sharing and technical assistance.

Chronic Disease Self-Management:

The QIO Program provides evidence-based treatment recommendations for cardiac and vascular health, diabetes and End Stage Renal Disease and connections to local resources for people with Medicare like disease self-management and lifestyle change programs.



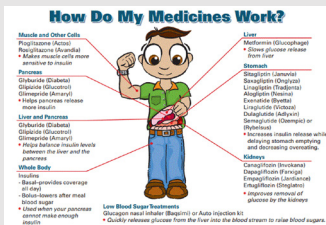
How Blood Sugar Affects the Body (English)

This one-page document, developed by TMF Quality Innovation Network, was created for health care providers and offers resources they can use when talking with patients who are at risk for pre-diabetes and diabetes. Also available in [Spanish](#).



Telligen Leverages Publicly Available Data for Community Rankings Report

The Community Rankings Report was created to aggregate publicly available data for each of the Telligen communities within its states, directing the technical assistance it provides to partners within its communities.



How Do My Medicines Work?

This poster developed by TMF Quality Innovation Network illustrates how diabetes medicines work with the body. Also available in [Spanish](#).

Care Coordination and Reducing Readmissions:

The QIO Program helps health care providers develop processes to better coordinate care and improve communication with post-acute providers, people with Medicare and their families.



Collaboration Reduces Hospital Readmissions, Improves Patient Care and Outcomes

The Health Quality Innovation Network team partners with health care providers including SoutheastHEALTH in Missouri, which was recognized with a 2021 Health Quality Innovator of the Year award for making great strides in improving patient care and outcomes related to chronic disease management, readmissions and social determinants of health issues in their local community.



HSAG HQIC Readmission Technical Assistance

HSAG HQIC leveraged the Readmission Discharge Distribution data in the performance dashboard to assist hospitals in identifying strategies and interventions that target opportunities for improvement, including 0–7-day readmissions, diagnosis-specific, discharge disposition, racial and socioeconomic disparities, and community collaboration.

Nursing Home Quality:

The QIO Program helps nursing homes improve their overall Five-Star Quality Rating and quality measure ratings on clinical measures for resident care.



Nursing Home Staff Retention Pilot Program Soars

The Health Quality Innovation Network reports on a nursing home pilot project that increased the facility's staff retention rate to 100% in four months. The Compassion Fatigue Awareness and Self-Care Skills Education improved compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary trauma stress scores.



Kindness RX Campaign

Mountain-Pacific Quality Health created a #KindnessRX campaign targeting clinicians and providers to support culture change and positivity and improve vaccination rates in Wyoming.



Antibiotic Stewardship for Nursing Homes

The Core Elements of Antibiotic Stewardship for Nursing Homes adapts the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Core Elements of Hospital Antibiotic Stewardship into practical ways to initiate or expand antibiotic stewardship activities in nursing homes.



Superior Health Quality Alliance's Online Forum Gives Clinicians a Place to Connect

Superior Health Quality Alliance Connect is a shared learning environment for Superior Health Participants to come together to foster and promote an all-teach-all-learn climate to improve and sustain mutual health care quality improvements locally, regionally, and nationally.

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