

MetaStar Begins Work on New Quality Improvement Organization Priorities Focused on System-wide Change

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In August 2011, MetaStar began working on the new Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) Program priorities with a focus on 3 aims: better patient care, better population health, and lower health care costs. The QIO Program is the largest federal program dedicated to improving health quality at the community level, and it has QIOs in every state and territory responding to local needs.

The new program priorities differ from those in the past in that they focus on effecting system-wide change by removing organizational, cultural, and geographic boundaries and by including health care professionals at all levels of clinical performance who make a commitment to improvement. MetaStar will convene large-scale learning and action networks throughout Wisconsin to accelerate the pace of change and to spread best practices rapidly. The improvement initiatives also will include collaborative projects, online interaction, and peer-to-peer education.

Improvement Aims

From August 2011 through July 2014, physi-

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cians, their health care professionals and quality stakeholders in Wisconsin can join MetaStar for the following.

To Improve Individual Patient Care—Patient safety initiatives in hospitals will reduce catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs), Clostridium difficile infections, and surgical site infections by implementing a program called the Comprehensive Unit-Based Safety Program (CUSP). All Medicare-participating hospitals will receive technical assistance for reporting inpatient and outpatient quality data to CMS.

In nursing homes, work initially targets pressure ulcers and physical restraints. It then will evolve to address other health care-acquired conditions, such as falls and CAUTIs.

To decrease adverse drug events, MetaStar is bringing together teams of community pharmacists, physicians, facilities, administrators, and patients into the federal Health Resources and Services Administration's Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Services Collaborative (PSPC).

To Improve Health for Populations and Communities—MetaStar will be assisting physician practices that want to use their electronic health record (EHR) system to coordinate and increase preventive services such as flu and pneumococcal immunizations and colorectal and breast cancer screenings. We also will assist practices with reporting Physician Quality Reporting System

(PQRS) measures to CMS via their EHR. Additionally, practices will be able to participate in a learning network focused on reducing patient risk factors for cardiac disease. MetaStar will partner with the Wisconsin Health Information Technology Extension Center (WHITEC) to promote health IT integration into clinical practice.

To Integrate Care for Populations and Communities—MetaStar is bringing together hospitals, nursing homes, patient advocacy organizations and other stakeholders in a community coalition. Our goal is to reduce hospital readmissions by improving transitions of care and to support the coalition's success in obtaining grant funding through Section 3026 of the Affordable Care Act.

To Deliver Beneficiary- and Family-Centered Care—MetaStar also will continue to fulfill CMS's obligation to protect the rights of Medicare beneficiaries by reviewing complaints about quality and appeals about the denial or discontinuation of health care services. In addition to reviewing complaints and appeals, MetaStar will invite Medicare beneficiaries and their families to become involved in meaningful ways in the improvement and prevention activities taking place in their communities.

As Wisconsin's QIO, MetaStar welcomes participation by all who want to contribute to better care, better health, and lower costs through improvement. For more information, visit www.metastar.com or contact Jay A. Gold, MD, JD, MPH, at 608.274.1940.

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