

Healthcare Quality Watch

MAY 2010

NEWS BRIEFS FOR
MANAGERS AND
OPINION LEADERS



Improving Healthcare
for the Common Good

IPRO Offers Classes for Seniors with Diabetes

IPRO has completed self-management training for about 900 Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes, under a special three-year program devoted to supporting seniors in underserved communities. These free Diabetes Wellness Workshops are offered in English and Spanish at community centers in all five boroughs of New York City. IPRO is one of a select group of Quality Improvement Organizations working on this project, under the direction of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). IPRO's goal is to have 2,500 beneficiaries complete the program by August 2011. To support the effort, IPRO is partnering with Univision Radio's flagship New York City station, WADO (1280 AM), to promote the program to Hispanic beneficiaries. The Univision partnership will include ongoing radio spots, web promotion, participation in health fairs and a November 2010 "graduation" event for program participants. IPRO is currently evaluating similar partnerships with radio stations that serve the City's African-American population. Roughly one in eight New York City residents has diabetes, and nearly 60% of NYC adults diagnosed with diabetes are African American or Hispanic. For more information on the project, contact Project Manager Janice Hidalgo at (516) 209-5310.

CMS Unveils Hospital Cost, Volume Website

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is debuting a new website that provides detailed information on payments to hospitals and volume for specific DRGs under the Medicare prospective payment system. Payments for the top 25 Medicare DRGs are arrayed by state and by individual hospitals within states. Hospitals can be compared on the basis of cost and volume using graphs or charts. Comparisons are available for hospitals within states and nationwide. Dubbed the CMS Dashboard, the beta version of the site includes information on discharges from January 2006 to December 2009.

Data from Medicare Advantage plans are not included in calculations. In a preview video entitled *The Road to Data Democracy*, officials from the Obama Administration describe the site as a major step in the effort to develop a more transparent healthcare system. The site will be updated on a monthly basis. It's available at www.cms.gov/dashboard.

Tallon Keynotes IPRO Annual Meeting

"Health Reform for New York and the Nation" is the theme of the keynote address to be presented by James R. Tallon, Jr. at IPRO's 26th Annual Meeting, to be held June 8th at the LaGuardia Marriott hotel in East Elmhurst, NY. As President of the United Hospital Fund of New York, Tallon heads a nonprofit research and philanthropic organization that is committed to promoting high-quality, patient-centered services that are accessible to all. Among the Fund's major achievements are its leadership role in framing New York City's earliest responses to the AIDS crisis, its pioneering programs to improve end-of-life care and its developing and publishing the influential *Blueprint for Universal Health Insurance Coverage in New York*. In addition to his leadership position at the nation's oldest federated charity, Tallon chairs The Commonwealth Fund and the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. He is a member of the Board of the Institute on Medicine as a Profession and the New York eHealth Collaborative. Prior to joining the Fund, Tallon was for 19 years a member of the New York State Assembly, serving as Majority Leader from 1987 to 1993. IPRO's Annual Meeting includes a complimentary luncheon and a ceremony honoring quality improvement specialists from across the state. Registration is required. To register, visit www.ipro.org/annualmeeting or call Susan Ulmer at (516) 209-5258.

IPRO Author Analyzes Payment Alternatives

Payers should take a flexible approach to payment reform, given the evolving but fragmented nature of the U.S. healthcare system, according to a key chapter of a new book addressing partnerships between physicians and hospitals. "...Payers might offer a blended fee-for-service and care management fee payment model for practices that are able to meet the requirements of the medical home model, a global DRG case rate model that includes hospital and postacute care for...systems that can accept responsibility for patients across the continuum of care during and following an inpatient stay, and a global payment per enrollee for more organized systems," write the authors. The chapter, written by Stuart Guterman, Assistant Vice President of The Commonwealth Fund and Anthony Shih, MD, MPH, Vice President of IPRO, offers a brief history of recent payment methodologies, followed by analysis of emerging alternatives. It is included in *Partners in Health: How Physicians and Hospitals can be Accountable Together*, edited by Francis J. Crosson and Laura A. Tollen, Kaiser Permanente Institute for Health Policy, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. To obtain a copy of the book, visit www.josseybass.com.

Senate Finance to Review Berwick Nomination

At press time, the Senate Finance Committee hadn't yet scheduled a hearing to review the nomination of Donald Berwick, MD, MPP, to the position of Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Announced by President Obama on April 19, the Berwick nomination is widely hailed as advancing the nation's quality agenda. As a founder and as Chief Executive Officer of the Boston-based Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Berwick is known for championing the *100,000 Lives Campaign* and other national quality initiatives. "Dr. Berwick has dedicated his career to improving outcomes for patients and providing better care at lower cost," President Obama said during his nomination press event. "That's one of the core missions facing our next CMS Administrator, and I'm confident that Don will be an outstanding leader for the agency and the millions of Americans it serves." Among his numerous honors, Berwick was the 2006 recipient of the John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Award for Individual Achievement, given by the National Quality Forum and the 2007 Heinz Award for Public Policy from the Heinz Family Foundation. The Berwick nomination was greeted with enthusiasm by a number of advocacy and professional organizations including the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association and the American Health Quality Association (a trade association representing Quality Improvement Organizations).

Feds to Analyze Geographic Variation

Eleventh-hour negotiations between Democrats in the House of Representatives and The White House over health reform resulted in agreement on two important studies and a summit this fall—all addressing geographic variation in healthcare spending and the effort to promote value-based purchasing. The House Quality Care Coalition, composed of an estimated 30 to 40 members from mostly rural mid-western and northwestern districts, worked aggressively to gain Administration support for provisions in the House reform package that couldn't be included

in the final reform package due to procedural issues. These provisions included an estimated \$800 million in Medicare payment adjustments affecting physician and hospital payments. Also included in the agreement between the Coalition and the White House are two studies to be undertaken by the independent Institute of Medicine. The first will look at what US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius calls "unjustified geographic variation in spending," while the second will examine the validity of current hospital and physician Medicare payment adjustments. The Secretary says she will direct the soon-to-be-created Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation at CMS to take IOM's recommendations into account in designing new payment methodologies and models. The summit—a National Summit on Geographic Variation, Cost, Access and Value in Health Care—is expected to take place this fall.

Commonwealth Infection Webinar Available

An April Commonwealth Fund webinar on eliminating central line-associated bloodstream infections is now available for download. Presenters include Lucian L. Leape, MD, of the Harvard School of Public Health; Peter J. Pronovost, MD, Ph.D of the Johns Hopkins University Quality and Safety Research Group; and Brian S. Koll, MD, of the Beth Israel Medical Center. The Commonwealth Fund will soon be adding data on central line-associated bloodstream infections at 900 hospitals to its landmark website at www.whynotthebest.org. That site, developed and programmed by IPRO's eServices department, permits side-by-side comparison of 4,500 hospitals nationwide, utilizing numerous benchmarks and learning tools. For more information, visit www.commonwealthfund.org.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please forward them to the Editor, Spencer Vibbert, at svibbert@ipro.org.

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IPRO is a national organization providing a full spectrum of healthcare assessment and improvement services that foster more efficient use of resources and enhance healthcare quality to achieve better patient outcomes. Founded in 1984, IPRO is highly regarded for the independence of its approach, the depth of its knowledge and experience, and the integrity of its programs. IPRO holds contracts with Federal, State and local government agencies, as well as private-sector clients, operating best-of-class programs in more than 33 states and the District of Columbia. A national not-for-profit organization, IPRO is headquartered in Lake Success, NY and is a 501(c)(3) corporation.