

# Healthcare Quality Watch

JULY 2011



**Improving Healthcare  
for the Common Good®**

**NEWS BRIEFS FOR  
MANAGERS AND  
OPINION LEADERS**

## IPRO Honors 14 Providers with Quality Awards

Fourteen healthcare organizations from throughout New York State have been named recipients of the 2011 IPRO Quality Awards. The awards recognize providers and professionals who demonstrate a commitment to improving the quality of care provided to New York's Medicare beneficiaries and Medicaid recipients. The awards were given during IPRO's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, June 7<sup>th</sup> at the LaGuardia Marriott Hotel.

Awards were given for accomplishments on a range of quality-related projects:

Organization/Individual	NYS Location	Project
Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic	Clifton Springs	Patient Safety - Reducing the Incidence and Transmission of MRSA in Hospitals
Elmhurst Hospital Center	Elmhurst	Patient-Centered Care/Beneficiary Protection
Farmington Family Practice	Canandaigua	Electronic Health Records/Preventive Services
Glens Falls Hospital	Glens Falls	Care Transitions
Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center	Brooklyn	Patient Safety - Surgical Care Improvement
Dr. Vasantha Kondamudi and The Brooklyn Hospital Center's Family Medicine Center	Brooklyn	Patient-Centered Medical Homes
Marquis Care Center	Glen Cove	Patient Safety - Eliminating the Use of Physical Restraints in Nursing Homes
Huntington Hospital North Shore/LIJ Health System	Huntington	Patient Safety - Reducing the Incidence and Transmission of MRSA in Hospitals
Omnicare Pharmacy	Malta	Patient Safety - Drug Safety
Richmond University Medical Center	Staten Island	Improving Care of Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center	New York	Patient Safety - Reducing the Incidence and Transmission of MRSA in Hospitals
Van Rensselaer Manor	Troy	Care Transitions
Warren County Health Services Certified Home Health Agency	Lake George	Care Transitions
White Oaks Nursing Home	Woodbury	Patient-Centered Care/Beneficiary Protection

"These awardees represent a broad cross section of New York State's healthcare community," says Clare B. Bradley MD, MPH, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, IPRO. "But what unites them is their commitment to quality. We applaud them for their achievements."

### **IPRO Executive Named to Accreditation Board**

IPRO Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Harry M. Feder, MPA, has been named to the Board of Directors of URAC, the nationally recognized healthcare accreditation organization. "We're delighted to welcome Harry to our Board of Directors," said Alan P. Spielman, URAC President and CEO. "We know we will benefit from his experience and his counsel." Founded 20 years ago, URAC is one of the nation's leading healthcare accreditation and education organizations, now offering more than 25 accreditation and certification programs. URAC's programs are recognized by 46 states and the District of Columbia as well as five federal agencies. A non-profit, URAC accredits a wide-range of providers including health plans, case managers, disease management programs and independent review organizations. URAC's broad-based governance structure and inclusive standards development process are intended to ensure that all stakeholders are represented in its management and operations. "URAC's governance is critical to its success," said Feder. "All parties need to be assured representation but no single constituency dominates the organization." Formerly President of the National Association of Independent Review Organizations (2005-2007), Feder is a columnist with the *Journal of Health Care Compliance*. Feder will be representing quality improvement organizations on the URAC board.

### **IPRO Physician Reviewer Honored as Trustee**

Congratulations to IPRO Physician Reviewer Calvin J. Simons, MD, FACP, winner of the United Hospital Fund's 2011 Distinguished Trustee Award. Dr Simons was recognized for his service to The Brooklyn Hospital Center, where he is Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee as well as a member of the Executive, Academic Affairs, Audit and Corporate Compliance and Joint Conference Committees. Awards were presented at a luncheon ceremony held June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Manhattan.

### **Feds Propose Easy Access to Medicare Performance Data**

Qualified researchers would have ready access to a wealth of Medicare performance information, under a proposed rule issued June 8<sup>th</sup> by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Issued under authority granted by the Affordable Care Act, the proposed rule would cover disclosure of fee-for-service claims information representing services provided by hospitals (inpatient and outpatient), skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies and hospice providers. Researchers could also access Part D drug claims information. Qualified entities would have to submit prototypes of the public reports they intend to issue and would have to meet stringent confidentiality safeguards. Quality measures would have to be vetted by CMS and providers would have to be given the opportunity to comment on draft findings prior to release. The agency is proposing that qualified entities demonstrate access to two other claims data bases, in order to assure that public reports provide a complete picture of a given provider's performance. CMS estimates that based on past experience, the community-based collaboratives requesting the data would likely seek three years of

data for 2.5 million beneficiaries, at an estimated cost of \$200,000. While applauding the goals of the proposed rule, some researchers say that figure is too high. Comments on the proposed rule entitled Medicare Program: Availability of Medicare Data for Performance Measurement is due August 8<sup>th</sup>. For more information, go to [www.gpoaccess.gov/fr](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr) or contact Colleen Bruce at (410) 786-5529.

### **Former Federal Official Examines U.S. Reform Law**

Three new entities created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA)—the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation and the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB)—offer "a powerful constellation in theory," according to Peter Orszag, Vice Chair of Global Banking at Citigroup and former Director of the White House's Office of Management and Budget. Writing in the July/August issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Orszag argues that the IPAB is the most promising of the new institutions created by the reform law—the IPAB has the power to force reductions in Medicare spending when projected growth exceeds a specified target. The only way to prevent such reductions will be for Congress to pass special legislation to block an IPAB action. Orszag argues that the "biggest substantive shortcoming" in the ACA is in the area of tort reform. He proposes safe harbors from malpractice litigation for physicians who follow evidence-based practice guidelines. For a copy of "How Health Care Can Save or Sink America," visit [www.foreignaffairs.com](http://www.foreignaffairs.com).

### **Government Announces New Patient Safety Initiative**

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation has announced it will soon award multiple contracts to Hospital Engagement Contractors (HECs) charged with assisting acute-care institutions in enhancing patient safety. The Administration says it is making up to \$500 million available for this effort, which is part of the larger Partnership for Patients that was announced this spring. The goal of the public-private Partnership is to reduce harm in hospital settings by 40 percent and to reduce hospital readmissions by 20 percent over a three-year period. For more information, visit [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov).

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.  
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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. For more than 25 years, IPRO has been 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 and corporate clients, in more than 33 states and the District of Columbia. A not-for-profit organization, IPRO is headquartered in Lake Success, NY.