



Experts in Defining and Improving the Quality of Health Care

Health Care Quality Watch

MONTHLY NEWS BRIEFS FOR MANAGERS AND OPINION LEADERS

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IPRO and its public relations agency, M Booth & Associates, have received one of the communications industry's most prestigious awards: the Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA) Big Apple. The award was given by PRSA for the media launch of the New York State Health Accountability Foundation's 2006 Health Care Report Card, which features cost and quality information on hospitals and managed care plans across New York. According to PRSA, "M Booth & Associates helped IPRO and the Health Accountability Foundation launch their first New York State Health Care Report Card with more than 70 news stories and thousands of visits by employers and consumers to the report card Web site." IPRO's award was the only one given in its category, "Marketing Consumer Services: Healthcare Services." The report card campaign also won a Platinum MarCom Creative Award in December 2006. The online report card is available at www.abouthealthquality.org.

A leading nursing home trade association is praising QIOs for elevating quality improvement at skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) across the nation. The Washington DC-based American Health Care Association notes that improvement on key clinical quality indicators is more dramatic at SNFs that work closely with QIOs than among facilities that don't receive intensive technical assistance from the state-based organizations. For 2004-2006, AHCA says nursing homes receiving intensive QIO assistance showed a 16 percent relative improvement in preventing pressure ulcers — against a nationwide 9 percent

relative improvement for homes that didn't work closely with QIOs. That finding is in line with a report last winter from the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ) that found significantly better rates of improvement across settings on measures QIOs are working on than on other quality measures. "We are fully committed to improvement efforts that ensure the frail, elderly and disabled have access to the highest quality nursing home care and services," stated Bruce Yarwood, president and CEO of the American Health Care Association. "This most recent AHRQ data reaffirms that collaborative efforts between nursing homes and QIOs are an effective tool to improve care for our nation's most vulnerable populations." For more information, visit that Association's Web site at www.abca.org. To review state-by-state quality findings developed by AHRQ, visit the agency's Web site at www.ahrq.gov.

A new process for expedited QIO review of proposed hospital discharges begins next month. Effective July 2, Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries as well as Medicare Advantage Plan enrollees can request reviews seven days a week (including weekends and holidays). Hospitals and managed care plans will, in turn, be obliged to produce requested medical records and other required information on a seven-day-a-week basis. The final rule published last fall in the Federal Register requires that information requested of hospitals and plans be provided to IPRO no later than noon of the day following IPRO's request. Administrative Memos on this topic (dated June 11, 2007) are available on

IPRO's Web site at www.ipro.org. For additional information, contact Alice Vallar, Senior Director, Medicare/Federal Health Care Assessment at 516-326-7767, ext. 423 or Fran Gordon, Assistant Director, at ext. 304.

Renato L. Estrella was installed as President-Elect of the New York Health Information Management Association (NYHIMA) during its Annual Conference awards banquet on June 12 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Rochester, NY. Estrella will serve as President-Elect from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 and then assume the office of NYHIMA President for the 2008-2009 Association year. As part of a seven-member elected volunteer Board of Directors, he will work with the Association's Executive Director and Central Office staff to provide educational and professional services to members. NYHIMA is a non-profit organization serving nearly 3,000 health information management professionals employed in hospitals and other health care settings throughout New York State. Since 1935, NYHIMA has been dedicated to promoting the professional excellence of its members through education, advocacy, and alliances, thereby ensuring quality health information to benefit the public, the health consumer, providers, and other users of clinical data. Members of NYHIMA are trained in the principles of health information management and are certified and/or registered by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), the parent organization.

Each year IPRO recognizes outstanding performance by health care providers and stakeholders throughout New York with our Quality Awards Program. Announced at IPRO's Annual Meeting, held this year at the LaGuardia Marriott Hotel on June 5, the ceremony recognizes leaders drawn from hospitals, home health agencies, nursing homes, and physician offices.

AMBULATORY CARE

For exemplary performance and leadership in promoting health information technology – Doctor's Office Quality-Information Technology (DOQ-IT) Project:

PATRICIA L. HALE, MD, PhD,
Gansevoort, New York

For exemplary performance and organization-wide commitment to quality improvement – Asthma Outpatient Project:

FLORENCE NNEBE, MD,
STATEN ISLAND UNIVERSITY
HOSPITAL, NORTH PEDIATRIC CLINIC,
Staten Island, New York

For exemplary performance and organization-wide commitment to quality improvement – Asthma and Diabetes Outpatient Project:

ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL
AMBULATORY CARE NETWORK,
Albany, New York

For exemplary performance and sharing of best practices – Doctor's Office Quality-Information Technology (DOQ-IT) Project:

BONNIE SUNDAY, MD,
Orchard Park, New York

For exemplary performance, organization-wide commitment to quality improvement and promotion of health information technology for quality improvement – Doctor's Office Quality-Information Technology (DOQ-IT) Project:

SALVATORE VOLPE, MD,
Staten Island, New York

For outstanding efforts in adopting and promoting health information technology – Doctor's Office Quality-Information Technology (DOQ-IT) Project:

ERNEST VOMERO, MD,
Huntington, New York

ROBERT McCALLION, RN, ANP,
Huntington, New York

HOME HEALTH AGENCIES

In recognition of highest relative improvement: Reduction of Avoidable Acute Care Hospitalizations/Improvement in Pain Interfering with Activity – Home Health Quality Initiative:

FULTON COUNTY NURSING SERVICE,
Gloverville, New York

In recognition of achievement as a top performing New York State Home Health Agency: Reduction of Avoidable Acute Care Hospitalizations/Improvement in Oral Medication Management – Home Health Quality Initiative:

HCR HOME HEALTH AGENCY,
Rochester, New York

In recognition of achievement of highest relative improvement of all New York State agencies:

Reduction of Avoidable Acute Care Hospitalizations/Improvement in Oral Medication Management – Home Health Quality Initiative:

JEWISH HOME & HOSPITAL
HOME HEALTH CARE,
New York, New York

Health Care Quality Watch is published monthly by IPRO's **Department of Communications & Corporate Development**. IPRO is a not-for-profit organization that works with public and private sector clients to analyze and improve the quality of health care. For further information, contact:

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www.ipro.org.

HOSPITALS

For exemplary performance, organization-wide commitment to quality improvement, and sharing of best practices – Organizational Safety Culture Change Project; Appropriate Care Measure Project:

ELIZABETHTOWN COMMUNITY
HOSPITAL,
Elizabethtown, New York

For exemplary performance, organization-wide commitment to quality improvement, and sharing of best practices – Appropriate Care Measure Project:

VASSAR BROTHERS MEDICAL CENTER,
Poughkeepsie, New York

For exemplary performance and organization-wide commitment to quality improvement – Surgical Care Improvement Project:

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL,
Mineola, New York

NURSING HOMES

For exemplary performance, organization-wide commitment to quality improvement and sharing of best practices – Nursing Home Quality Initiative:

MARY MANNING WALSH HOME,
New York, New York

OUR LADY OF MERCY LIFE CENTER,
Guilford, New York

ST. JOHNSTOWN REHABILITATION
AND NURSING CENTER,
St. Johnstown, New York

PROVIDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE

For commitment to quality improvement and management and in recognition of ten years of service on IPRO's Provider Relations Committee – Medicare and Medicaid Review Operations:

CONSUELO DUNGCA, RN, EDD,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
CLINICAL AFFAIRS,
NYC HEALTH AND HOSPITALS
CORPORATION,
New York, New York