



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 is one of only two Medicare-funded Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) in the nation to win all competitive procurements for special three-year funding to support innovative quality improvement activities at the local level. All 53 statewide QIO contracts will focus on beneficiary protection, patient safety and prevention, but under agreements that began August 1, special funding will be devoted to “sub-national” projects addressing Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), Health Disparities and Care Transitions. While 19 QIOs won one or more of these “sub-national” procurements, IPRO and the QIO for the state of Georgia were the only two QIOs to obtain special funding in all three areas. IPRO’s CKD project will address the need for more screening and early intervention among high-risk groups including diabetics. IPRO’s Disparities Project will focus on increasing Diabetes Self-Management Education among African-American and Latino Medicare beneficiaries in downstate counties. The Care Transitions team will take a community-wide approach to reducing re-hospitalizations and improving communication across care settings. That project will take place in the Upper Capital District, which includes the counties of Rensselaer, Schenectady, Warren, Washington and Saratoga. For more information on IPRO’s entire “Ninth Scope of Work” under its Medicare contract, visit www.ipro.org.

IPRO’s “Your Health. Your Voice.” campaign has won a Mature Media Award, sponsored by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the American Custom Publishing Corporation. The award was for a radio Public Service Announcement IPRO created to promote the campaign, which was an intensive, multi-media outreach effort to publicize seniors’ rights to lodge Medicare quality of care complaints via QIO telephone helplines. IPRO and QIOs in Florida, Ohio and California engaged in 120-day outreach campaigns, which, in New York, included print and online outreach materials, radio and print advertising, newspaper articles, a special Spanish language-only outreach event, and teach-ins for health care professionals in five cities across the state. IPRO’s “Your Health. Your Voice.” Web site features materials in English, Spanish, Russian and Chinese. To learn more about the campaign, visit www.yourhealthyyourvoice.org.

IPRO has created a Limited Liability Company (LLC) that will assume all of IPRO’s oversight contracts with managed care organizations (MCOs). The new entity, Logiqua (www.logiqua.com), is now officially incorporated in New York State, with its own Board of Managers. Logiqua will take over all of IPRO’s private-sector MCO quality audit and consulting business, effective immediately. IPRO has functioned as a Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) compliance audit organization since

1997. HEDIS audit organizations are licensed by the Washington DC-based National Committee for Quality Assurance. HEDIS audits include validation of plans’ performance measure calculations, medical record review processes, statistical computations and sampling methodologies. IPRO has conducted approximately 1,000 HEDIS compliance audits in thirty states, using NCQA-certified auditor employees and subcontractors. For more information, contact Logiqua CEO Anu Sajja at 1-800-304-9235.

Anthony Shih, MD, MPH, has rejoined IPRO as Chief Quality Officer and Vice President of Strategic Planning, after a two-year stint at The Commonwealth Fund, a national foundation committed to improving U.S. health system performance, where he directed the foundation’s Program on Health Care Quality Improvement and Efficiency. Board-certified in public health and preventive medicine, Shih, held senior-level positions at IPRO from 2001 to 2006, including Vice President of Health Care Quality Improvement and Medical Director of Managed Care. “All of us at IPRO are delighted that Tony is returning to direct strategic planning for our organization,” said IPRO Chief Executive Officer Theodore O. Will. “We recognize that health care in the U.S. is at a critical juncture. I can think of very few individuals as qualified as Tony to guide us in priority-setting for the next decade and beyond.” Shih

holds a B.A. in economics from Amherst College, an M.D. from New York University School of Medicine and an M.P.H. from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.

Hospital mortality data recently made available by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services include for the first time each institution's risk-standardized mortality rate, an estimate of the certainty of that rate and the number of cases included in the computations.

The more robust Medicare mortality data set now permits users to drill down from displays that rank hospital quality as "better," "worse," or "no different" than the national rate. In addition to mortality data, the site now includes performance results for pediatric asthma measures, clinical process of care measures and findings from consumer assessments of hospital care (HCAHPS), as well as Medicare payment and volume information. For more information, visit www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov.

An overwhelming majority of Americans believe the U.S. health care system should be changed fundamentally or rebuilt entirely, according to a survey of 1,004 adults conducted by Harris Interactive and released in August by the Commonwealth Fund. Approximately 50 percent of Americans favor fundamental change, a percentage that holds steady regardless of income or geographic region of residence. A third of individuals surveyed by Harris believe that a complete rebuild of the system is required; that rate climbs to 45 percent for Americans who were uninsured during the past year. A report from Commonwealth's Commission on A High Performance Health System that accompanies the survey argues for six

essential attributes of an improved delivery system. The attributes include the use of electronic health records that are accessible to patients and providers; actively managed care coordination; practitioner accountability to one another across settings; easy access to culturally competent care for patients; provider accountability for total rather than episodic care; and a systematic approach to continuous improvement in quality, value and patient experience. For more information on the survey and report, visit the Commonwealth Fund's Web site at www.cmuf.org.

IPRO's Renato Estrella, MSHA RHIA, Director, Health Information Management, Federal/Medicare Health Care Assessment, was installed as President of the New York Health Information Management Association, Inc. (NYHIMA) for 2008-09 during the association's awards banquet this summer, at the Saratoga Hilton Hotel in Saratoga Springs, New York. NYHIMA, a Component State Association of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), 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. Its members are trained in the principles of health information management and are the credentialed specialists responsible for managing the health care information that is an increasingly important component of our nation's health care delivery system.

This fall, the New York State Health Accountability Foundation (NYSHAF) will publish its second annual New York Regional Health Care Report Card. The report card provides data on the cost and quality of commercial managed care plans and the quality of care, mortality rates, length of stay and pricing of care provided to hospital patients in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Available at www.AboutHealthQuality.org, the report card is interactive and searchable by county. IPRO and the New York Business Group on Health are founding partners of the NYSHAF, a private/public partnership directed by an Advisory Council of major New York-area employers. The Health Accountability Foundation is directed by an Advisory Council representing leading New York employers, including The Bank of New York, The City of New York and the CBS Corporation.

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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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**New York State Healthcare
Report Card**

www.abouthealthquality.org/hcrc

**New York State
Health Accountability Foundation**

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