

Healthcare Quality Watch

FEBRUARY/
MARCH 2016

NEWS BRIEFS FOR
MANAGERS AND
OPINION LEADERS



Improving Healthcare
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IPRO Annual Meeting Registration Now Open

John Black, one of the nation's leading authorities on the Lean methodology for enhancing healthcare quality and efficiency, will be a featured speaker at IPRO's 32nd Annual Membership Meeting, to be held Tuesday June 7 at the New York LaGuardia Airport Marriott Hotel in East Elmhurst, NY. Formerly Director of Lean Manufacturing at Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Black has consulted to leading healthcare institutions like the Virginia Mason Medical Center and Park Nicollet Health Services, as well as governmental authorities, including the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. IPRO's Membership Meeting will also include presentation of the organization's 2016 Quality Awards. To register online for this event, which is free and includes a complimentary luncheon, go to <http://ipro.org/about/32nd-annual-meeting>.

IPRO Renews Early Intervention Contract

IPRO has obtained a new, five-year contract to conduct statewide quality assurance activities for Early Intervention service providers and municipalities in New York. IPRO's team monitors therapeutic and support services provided to eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The IPRO team successfully renewed its contract with the State of New York for the five-year period from April 1, 2016 through March 31, 2021—IPRO has been reviewing EI services in New York for the past 14 years. The New York State Early Intervention Program is part of the national program. First created by Congress in 1986 under the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act, the EIP is administered by the New York State Department of Health through the Bureau of Early Intervention. To be eligible for services, children must be under three years of age and have a confirmed disability or established developmental delay, in one or more of the following areas of development: physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, and/or adaptive.

Research Supports Readmissions Program

Federal payment policy aimed at reducing hospital readmissions for key conditions hasn't resulted in a demonstrable increase in the use of "observation stays," according to new research published in *The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*. Critics of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), have posited that penalties for readmissions of Medicare patients with acute myocardial infarctions, heart failure and pneumonia would result in an increase in the use of "observation stays" as a way to avoid payment reductions. Researchers find that observation stays were increasing prior to passage of the ACA and that there was "no significant association within hospitals between increases in observation-service use and reductions in readmissions during the implementation period." The article, "Readmissions, Observation, and the Hospital Readmissions Program," by Rachael B. Zuckerman, MPH and colleagues appears in the February 24 issue of *NEJM*. For more information, visit the publication's website at www.nejm.org.

IPRO's Sepsis Awareness Training Schedule in Place

IPRO has initiated a federally funded Special Innovation Project to raise awareness of sepsis as a medical emergency across the public and health provider communities—focusing on Albany and Syracuse in New York and the Charleston region of South Carolina. Evidence-based resources, tools and materials have been developed in collaboration with medical, academic and community-based experts as well as sepsis-based patient advocacy organizations. Educational sessions focus on recognition of the early signs and symptoms of sepsis, best practice protocols to ensure timely referrals to the next level of care and improving care transitions between pre-hospital providers and hospital Emergency Departments. Training sessions for non-hospital health care facility staff commenced on February 23rd, 2016 and will continue through May 2016. Ongoing involvement of community based coalitions of health care providers and community stakeholders will support efforts to educate the general public. For more information on the IPRO Community Based Sepsis Initiative and to view the launch webinar, please visit: <http://atlanticquality.org/initiatives/sepsis-initiative>.

Advance Care Planning Training Underway

More than 130 healthcare professionals from Nassau and Suffolk Counties attended IPRO's Transforming End Of Life Care Special Innovation Project kick-off event in Melville, NY on January 19th. Featured speakers included Patricia A. Bomba, MD, FACP, Chair of the Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) Statewide Implementation Team; and Janet L. Dolgin, PhD, JD, and Adam Kahn, JD, from The Gitenstein Institute for Health Law and Policy at the Hofstra University School of Law. The initiative serves to inform Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers and healthcare professionals about end-of-life advance care planning—with the goal of improving the quality of care individuals receive at the end of their lives by honoring their preferences, values and beliefs through a shared and informed decision making. A key upcoming event is National Healthcare Decisions Day on April 16th. For more information on Advance Care Planning and healthcare proxies, visit www.compassionandsupport.org, www.thechatproject.org, and <http://atlanticquality.org>.

Public, Private-Sectors Agree on Quality Measures

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), the nation's leading managed care trade association, have announced agreement on seven sets of quality measures they'll use to evaluate provider performance in the public and private sectors. Numerous experts, including a recent blue-ribbon panel of The Institute of Medicine, have long argued against the large number of overlapping and sometime contradictory quality measures now in use in the U.S. The goal of the 18-month Core Quality Measures Collaborative was to "establish broadly agreed upon quality measures that will allow for less complexity in reporting for clinicians, decrease the overall cost

burden to consumers and the health care system, and ensure high-quality care for patients," according to an AHIP news release. The seven measure sets address accountable care and patient-centered medical homes, cardiology, gastroenterology, HIV/Hepatitis C, medical oncology, orthopedics, and obstetrics and gynecology. The Collaborative included The National Quality Forum, medical specialty societies, consumer groups and employer representatives. CMS says it is already using a number of the measures but that private payers will take a phased-in approach to implementation, based on the timing of individual contract renewals. For more information, visit www.cms.gov and www.ahipcoverage.com.

IPRO Senior Manager Appointed to Quality Panel

IPRO Vice President Edison ("Eddie") Machado, Jr., MD, MBA has been chosen by the Washington DC-based National Quality Forum (NQF), to serve on its Attribution Multi-Stakeholder Committee. NQF has a leadership role in the national effort to develop and evaluate healthcare performance measures. The Multi-Stakeholder Committee will advise NQF on how best to attribute the contributions of individual members of healthcare delivery teams—an essential aspect of payment reform. Dr. Machado is representing the American Health Quality Association on the Committee.

Healthcare Quality Watch is published by the Communications Department at IPRO.

For an electronic version of *Healthcare Quality Watch*, visit <http://ipro.org/about/publications/newsletters/quality-watch>.

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. For 30 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.