

# Healthcare Quality Watch

JUNE/JULY 2016

NEWS BRIEFS FOR  
MANAGERS AND  
OPINION LEADERS



Improving Healthcare  
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## IPRO Honors 2016 Quality Awardees

An inner-city medical center, an upstate group practice and the nation's largest public healthcare delivery systems are all winners of this year's IPRO Quality Awards, which were announced at IPRO's 32nd Annual Meeting, held June 7, 2016 at the LaGuardia Marriott Hotel in East Elmhurst, New York. The Queens Hospital Center of Jamaica, New York was recognized for having achieved the greatest improvements in reduction of healthcare associated infections of all New York State hospitals participating in IPRO's quality improvement activities—an 83% relative improvement in catheter associated urinary tract infections and a 66% relative improvement in central line blood stream infections. Arnot Health, a group practice headquartered in Elmira, New York, was honored for having attained National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Patient Centered Medical Home Level 3 recognition for 12 different practice locations. The team is recognized for successful submission of essential quality performance measurements and for supporting 80 eligible physicians in achieving benchmark "meaningful use" of electronic health records. Finally, IPRO recognized New York City Health + Hospitals, a major, integrated public health system, for its organization-wide commitment to improving patient care, as evidenced by a majority of HHC hospitals achieving significant improvements in rates of central line blood infections and catheter associated urinary tract infections. "This year's IPRO Quality Award winners demonstrate a genuine and sustained organization-wide devotion to improving quality for all patients, said IPRO

Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President Clare Bradley, MD, MPH. "We congratulate the winners and salute their achievements." Featured speakers at this year's Annual Meeting included Mandy Cohen, MD, MPH, Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; David Rush, Home Dialysis Patient, Kidney Transplant Recipient, and Entertainer; and John Black, MBA, John Black and Associates, Lean Healthcare Consulting. For more information on this year's Quality Awards and Annual Meeting, read the IPRO press release at [www.ipro.org](http://www.ipro.org).

## Chief Medical Officer to Lead Trade Association

IPRO's Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President Clare Bradley, MD, MPH, has been chosen President-Elect of the American Health Quality Association (AHQA), a Washington DC-area healthcare trade association. Voting for a new slate of officers of AHQA took place at the association's Quality Summit held June 2 in Baltimore. AHQA represents quality improvement professionals nationwide. As Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of IPRO, Clare Bradley, MD, MPH, supervises IPRO's Quality Improvement, Managed Care and End Stage Renal Disease departments, overseeing an annual operating budget of more than \$25 million. Dr. Bradley's management responsibilities include supervision of more than 120 staff and consultant physicians, nurses, epidemiologists, statisticians, data analysts, project managers and other professionals. The contracts Dr. Bradley supervises encompass activities in New York, South Carolina, the District of Columbia, New England,

Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, Nebraska and Minnesota. "We're very pleased that Clare will be leading AHQA, at this critical juncture in the association's history," said IPRO Chief Executive Officer Theodore O. Will. Prior to her 13-year tenure at IPRO, Dr. Bradley held senior management positions at the Suffolk County (NY) Department of Health Services, culminating in the role of Commissioner, an appointed position which she held from 1998 to 2003-overseeing services provided to 1.4 million citizens and a budget of \$350 million. Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Dr. Bradley holds a Master of Science degree from Georgetown University, a Master of Public Health from Columbia University and a Medical Doctorate from the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

### **IPRO Physician Leads Payment Reform Workgroup**

IPRO Vice President and Chief Quality Officer Edison Machado, MD, MBA chaired a workgroup of AHQA that submitted industry comments June 27 on a major proposed rule regarding the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. MIPS replaces the Sustainable Growth Rate formula for updating Medicare payments to physicians. Under the new law, Medicare Part B payments to practitioners will be adjusted annually by up to 4% upwards and downwards based on performance scores beginning in 2019. Additionally, AHQA is nominating Dr. Machado to serve on a Technical Expert Panel that will advise CMS on development of episode-based resource use measures to be developed in support of Medicare's quality-based payment methodology. For more on this topic, see last article on this page.

### **Diabetes Self-Management a Growth Industry**

IPRO is on track to graduate 10,000 seniors from its Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) program by 2019, according to a June 28 Grand Rounds presentation to CMS staff in Baltimore by Janice Hidalgo, who directs IPRO's Everyone with Diabetes Counts (EDC) initiative. Initiated in 2008, under IPRO's Medicare-funded QIO contract, IPRO's bilingual program targets Hispanic and African-American seniors utilizing a Stanford University-developed curriculum that provides seniors self-management techniques to better manage their diabetes and to help achieve quantitative improvements on actual clinical outcomes measurements. Seniors attend workshops over a six-week period. IPRO's program uses a "Train the Trainer" approach whereby Community Health Worker students at La Guardia Community College earn academic credits by conducting DSME trainings. To learn more about IPRO's project, visit [www.atlanticquality.org](http://www.atlanticquality.org).

### **New Federal Proposal Emphasizes Infection Prevention**

Infection prevention is a key element of a new federal proposed rule intended to update the Medicare and Medicaid Conditions of Participation affecting 6,228 acute care and critical access hospitals across the U.S. The proposed rule issued June 13 by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services would require hospitals to empanel hospital-wide prevention and surveillance programs, emphasizing

control of infections and appropriate use of antibiotics. Hospitals would be obliged to designate leaders of infection control and antibiotic stewardship and to establish policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identify), sexual orientation, age or disability. Hospitals would be required to assure that all medical records include patient discharge instructions and that records are accessible to patients either in hard copy or electronically. The proposed rule carries a 60 day comment period. For more information, visit [www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection](http://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection).

### **Physician Groups Urge Caution in Payment Reform**

More than 3,000 comments were received prior to the June 27 submission deadline for the proposed rule implementing the Quality Payment Program, which, under federal law, replaces the Sustainable Growth Rate methodology for updating physician payments under Medicare. The proposed rule, which carries a 60-day comment period, offers detail on how the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) plans to operate the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and the Advanced Alternative Payment Models (APMs). The vast majority of Medicare-participating physicians are expected to fall under the MIPS, with a smaller number of clinicians reimbursed under risk-based APMs. Groups like the American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, the Medical Group Management Association, and the American Hospital Association are all urging CMS to delay the start date of the Quality Payment Program. Under the current plan, MIPS-participating physicians face Medicare Part B payment adjustments of up to 4% upwards and downwards, based on performance scores beginning in 2019. Adjustments climb to 9% beginning in 2022.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please forward them to the Editor, Spencer Vibbert, at [svibbert@ipro.org](mailto: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 more than 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.