



# RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Prevention

Through the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) Program, primary care physicians nationwide have delivered safer, more effective health care to thousands of Medicare beneficiaries over the last three years. By using their electronic health record systems to coordinate care, they increased rates of preventive services, demonstrating what every provider with the will to improve can accomplish. The success of practices that worked with their local QIO also has established a foundation for related, future QIO Program initiatives.

### Bringing best practices to the exam room

QIOs in every state and territory, united in a national network administered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, have the ability to focus health care quality improvement resources and expertise at the community level. Here is an example from the recently concluded Prevention initiative:

Working with a small family practice, the Colorado QIO discovered the practice's modest influenza immunization rates reflected a need to train staff in data entry and to capture information about immunizations that patients received elsewhere. The QIO linked the practice to the state adult vaccination registry and now the practice's electronic health record (EHR) system is generating more accurate patient reminders. To supplement the EHR's built-in preventive care prompts, the QIO provided the practice with exam room posters and reminder postcards, and encouraged them to make follow-up calls when patients are overdue for preventive services.

### Contributing to national health quality goals

From August 2008 through July 2011, a total of 1,744 primary care physicians across the country participated with their QIO in the Prevention initiative. They learned how to take full advantage of their EHR's functionality for supporting care coordination and to make associated changes in office workflow. As a result, participating practices were able to increase the number of patients for whom they have complete preventive care data, identify patients in need of preventive care, measure and improve their preventive care performance, and report data for related quality measures to CMS.

While Medicare now pays for more preventive services than ever before, not all beneficiaries take advantage of this benefit. Statistics show that Medicare patients visit their doctor six or more times a year but few are aware of the risks that can be detected by simple tests. The Prevention initiative leveraged health information technology to increase the capacity of primary care physicians to deliver preventive services, leading to increased rates of screening mammograms, colorectal screenings, and influenza and pneumonia vaccinations.

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The QIO Program is an integral part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Quality Strategy and is the largest federal program dedicated to improving health quality at the community level. As a major force and trustworthy partner for the continual improvement of health and health care for all Americans, QIOs work with patients, providers and practitioners across organizational, cultural and geographic boundaries to spread rapid, large-scale change. The work that QIOs perform spans every setting in which health care is delivered, even the critical transitions between those settings. The Program focuses on three aims: better patient care, better individual and population health, and lower health care costs through improvement.

**Quality Improvement Organization Program**

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### **Building on success, aiming even higher**

Moving forward, QIOs will continue assisting physician practices that want to use their EHRs to coordinate preventive services and report related quality measures to CMS. Practices also can participate in learning networks focused on reducing patient risk factors for cardiac disease. QIOs will partner with their local Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (REC) to promote health IT integration into clinical practice.

### **For more information**

The QIO Program invites physicians to be a part of its new Prevention initiative. To express an interest, contact your local QIO. A directory is provided in the Program's "Advances in Quality" report. More information also is available at [www.cms.gov/qualityimprovementorgs](http://www.cms.gov/qualityimprovementorgs).