

Office of Clinical Standards & Quality

FACT SHEET

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QIOs Re-focus Priorities under National Patient Safety Initiative

The Office of Clinical Standards & Quality, an office of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), announced today that it has re-focused its National Patient Safety Initiative (NPSI) to allow its local partners more flexibility in deciding which state-level patient safety goals require the most resources.

As part of this flexibility, CMS has decided to conclude the NPSI's formal work to reduce pressure ulcers (commonly known as "bed sores") in hospitals as of January 31, 2010. While formal efforts will be redirected, CMS expects that hospitals will either maintain or improve performance in reducing pressure ulcers through their own quality improvement activities. The QIO resources that had been devoted to this important work will be re-directed at the local level towards other patient safety projects. Decisions about which patient safety projects require these extra resources will be made on a state-by-state level by the QIOs, based on the unique needs of local healthcare providers and patients.

CMS is grateful to the hospitals that were a part of the NPSI's pressure ulcer project. The Agency commends these hospitals for stepping up to the challenge of addressing this important issue, and looks forward to partnering with them on future projects that aim to improve the quality of care in the nation's hospitals.

CMS had anticipated that the QIOs' current contract, the 9th Statement of Work (SOW) would bring opportunities for QIOs to help reduce the number of patients who develop a pressure ulcer during their hospital stays. All 53 QIOs successfully recruited hundreds of hospitals from throughout their states to join CMS and the QIOs in this important NPSI project.

After 18 months of hard work, partner hospitals in several states successfully improved care protocols as a result of QIO technical assistance; however, overall rates of pressure ulcers remained relatively low across the nation. Ultimately, the rate reported in hospitals was too low for this project to continue in a way that would bring about a substantial national-level impact on hospital safety.

CMS will maintain its commitment to improving the quality of hospital care by continuing to monitor hospital pressure ulcer rates, and will use its payment flexibilities to help reduce these rates.

NPSI is a national-level effort to deploy resources within each state/territory in an effort to improve the safety of American health care. As part of NPSI, QIOs are working across the nation with thousands of hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare providers on several projects that could potentially make care safer for all patients, including:

- Reducing rates of health care-associated methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections;
- Reducing rates of pressure ulcers in nursing homes;
- Reducing rates of physical restraint use in nursing homes;
- Improving inpatient surgical safety and heart failure treatment in hospitals;
- Improving drug safety; and
- Providing quality improvement technical assistance to Nursing Homes in Need.

NPSI is a cornerstone of the healthcare quality improvement work that QIOs perform on the local level in each state and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, under contract with CMS. Each of these NPSI projects will continue through the QIOs' current CMS contract cycle, which extends through July 2011. This work includes a continuing emphasis to reduce pressure ulcers in nursing homes.

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More information about NPSI and the QIOs is available at our Medicare Quality Improvement Community Web site at: www.qualitynet.org/MedQIC.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services thanks you for sharing our goal to make American healthcare safer for all patients.

About CMS' QIO Program

The QIO Program, created by law in 1982, provides three-year contracts to organizations throughout the country to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and economy of health care services delivered to Medicare beneficiaries and the public at large. To learn more about the QIO Program, call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit Medicare online at www.medicare.gov.

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