



An Information & Quality Healthcare (IQH) Publication Serving the Mississippi Healthcare Community

August 2014
Vol. 3, No. 8

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Events

August:
National
Immunization
Awareness Month

Sponsor: Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention,
National Center for
Immunization and
Respiratory Diseases

September:

Healthy Aging Month

National Healthcare
Quality Week:
October 19-25

September Regional
Programs: "Dementia
Beyond Drugs"

- September 15 - 16,
Hattiesburg

- September 18 - 19,
Grenada

- September 23 - 24,
Jackson

A focus on changing
the culture of care,
new approach to
caring for people
living with dementia.

New Chapter in Quality Improvement Begins August 1

Information & Quality Healthcare (IQH), Mississippi's longtime Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), will continue to lead healthcare quality improvement initiatives for the Medicare program in the state under a five-year contract through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Mississippi is a part of the new multi-state consortia, *atom Alliance*, that has been formed to improve healthcare quality for Medicare patients in Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi.

The five states include the atom Alliance organizational members of AQAF (Alabama); IQH (Mississippi), and Qsource (Tennessee, Indiana and Kentucky). Qsource is the nonprofit alliance's prime organizational contractor to CMS, serving as the Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO), with sub-contracts in place for AQAF in Alabama and IQH in Mississippi to carry out the work in their respective states. Each atom Alliance member has operated independently for more than 30 years as leaders in their state's healthcare quality improvement efforts.

The restructuring of the QIO program changes the former 53 contracts covering three-year periods to a regional structure for case review and the QIN-QIO program for the quality improvement initiatives. Under the new structure, atom Alliance will work with healthcare providers and communities on multiple, data-driven quality initiatives to improve patient safety, reduce harm and improve clinical care. Through its work, atom Alliance will support CMS in its efforts to improve and promote healthcare quality across the entire five-state area to ensure the right care is provided to healthcare patients, at the right time, every time.

Key Focus Areas

The atom Alliance will focus on several key initiatives during the next five years, with an emphasis on the entire region's rural health needs, according to Becky Roberson, IQH chief executive officer. "At a high level, our work with healthcare providers will focus on the prevention and treatment

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of chronic disease, such as improving cardiac health and reducing disparities in both cardiac and diabetes treatment and care," she noted. "We also will use our collective, specialized expertise to improve prevention coordination across the atom Alliance by working with providers to implement and understand the analytics and information available through healthcare information technologies. The Alliance organizations will continue working with healthcare providers to build upon the successful strategies in care transitions that have helped to reduce costs." Patient safety initiatives remain among the key topics for atom Alliance's work over the next five years, including working with hospitals to reduce healthcare associated infections and helping nursing homes reduce the use of antipsychotic medications and improve mobility by reducing incidents of fall-related injuries and restraint use.

*The atom Alliance is described as a positively charged, multi-state alliance composed of five nonprofit, healthcare quality improvement consulting companies. The center of the nucleus is the beneficiary and family. With the atom Alliance teaming to work within the five states, the mobilizing improvement efforts will be accomplished through aligning activities, leveraging shared expertise and using **A**dvising, **T**ransforming, **O**ptimizing and **M**onitoring as the methods, modes and actions for conducting the work.*

Case Review Shifts to New Organization Aug. 1

The CMS restructuring of the QIO program includes a separate group of QIOs handling the case review program. The Beneficiary and Family Centered Care Quality Improvement Organizations (BFCC-QIO) will manage beneficiary complaints, quality of care reviews, higher weighted DRGs, fast track appeals and EMTALAs to ensure consistency in the review process while taking into consideration local factors important to beneficiaries and their families. The BFCC-QIO for Mississippi is now KePRO, which will conduct all current and future beneficiary quality review case work and appeals in the state, effective Aug. 1. The address is KEPRO, Rock Run Center, Suite 100, 5700 Lombardo Center Drive, Seven Hills, OH 44131. As of Aug. 1, the beneficiary helpline number will be 1-844-430-9504, and the provider helpline will be 1-800-385-5080.

Dr. McIlwain Retires



Dr. James S. McIlwain, left, is congratulated by IQH board chairman Dr. Edward Bryant of Kosciusko on his retirement July 31. With over 30 years dedicated to the Medicare quality assurance program in the state, Dr. McIlwain retires from IQH, where he has served as President/CEO since 1997 through this past February. He is retiring as the president of medical affairs in which role he has provided clinical direction for all medical aspects of tobacco quitline services and oversight of utilization review activities.

This newsletter was prepared by IQH under a contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. IQH Publication No. 10SOW-MS-IQH-Comm-2137-14

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