



Regional Quality Improvement Initiative

Start Date: June 2006

Updated: April 2007

Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

No single health care provider, purchaser or payer can improve care for chronic conditions throughout a community on its own. To improve chronic care throughout a region or state, key stakeholders in the health care marketplace must implement coordinated strategies at the purchaser, health plan, provider, and consumer level. When this health care system alignment occurs, major breakthroughs in improving health care quality can be achieved.

With this goal in mind, the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS), with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, launched the Regional Quality Improvement (RQI) initiative. The RQI initiative seeks to leverage Medicaid's significant purchasing power to improve care for people with chronic conditions through partnerships with other health care leaders, including commercial insurers, employers, providers, and consumer organizations.

To create regional systems-level changes, multiple coordinated strategies must be implemented. Regional participants in the RQI initiative will implement the following approaches to drive regional quality improvement in health care:

1. **Cross-Payer Data Aggregation and Reporting of Performance Measures:** Developing common measures to assess quality of care and aggregating and sharing data with providers that reflect performance across multiple purchasers and insurers.
2. **Quality Improvement Infrastructure:** Helping providers improve their care delivery by using quality improvement tools, such as evidence-based guidelines, health information technology, and chronic care innovations.
3. **Consumer Engagement:** Engaging and educating consumers in self-management techniques and informed decision-making.
4. **Realigning Resources and Creating Financial Incentives:** Aligning provider payment and performance outcomes to support higher quality and more efficient care.

In 2006, CHCS chose three regions through a competitive, national selection process to participate in the RQI initiative:

***Arkansas
Rhode Island
Rochester, New York***

Project Summaries: Regional Quality Improvement Initiative

State of Arkansas

The Arkansas RQI initiative is targeting quality improvement breakthroughs in four

clinical areas: comprehensive diabetes care, cervical cancer screening, well-child visits, and preventive services for adults.

To create these improvements, participants are:

- Supporting and expanding the state's statewide Health Information Exchange;
- Standardizing and aggregating health care data across multiple payers to calculate measures which will drive coordinated quality improvement efforts; and
- Sharing performance measures across payers at a regional level.

The Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care and Arkansas Medicaid are leading the coalition, which represents over 1.1 million covered lives. In less than six months, the leaders have selected a set of performance measures and engaged a comprehensive group of regional stakeholders – approximately 30 to date – including:

- American College of Physicians
- Arkansas Health Care Association and Hospital Association
- Arkansas State Employees Insurance Plan
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield
- Electronic Data Systems (EDS)
- QualChoice of Arkansas
- Wal-Mart

State of Rhode Island

The Rhode Island RQI initiative is aligning performance standards and financial incentives among the state's health plans, purchasers, and providers. Using morbidity, cost, and prevalence data, stakeholders selected four chronic conditions for quality improvement: pediatric asthma, diabetes, coronary artery disease, and depression.

To improve ambulatory care delivery in these four areas, participants are:

- Developing cross-system improvement goals for each chronic condition and standardized measures across payers to monitor progress;
- Developing an enhanced reimbursement methodology to support the adoption of these services; and
- Aligning RQI measures with the state's ambulatory public reporting program, and setting, monitoring, and publicizing progress on statewide goals.

The Office of the Health Commissioner and Quality Partners of Rhode Island are co-leading this initiative, which will represent approximately 67 percent of covered lives in Rhode Island (approximately 640,000 individuals). Collaborating stakeholders include:

- Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Rhode Island
- Care New England
- Economic Development Corporation
- Lifespan
- Memorial Hospital
- Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island
- Rhode Island Business Group on Health
- Rhode Island Medicaid
- State Employees Purchasing Program

- **United Healthcare of New England**
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Rochester, New York

The Rochester, New York (Monroe County) RQI initiative is working across payers to improve the quality of care provided to individuals with diabetes at the practice-site level. Three health plans – representing Medicaid, Medicare, and commercial delivery systems – are:

- **Developing a diabetes registry to provide physicians with centralized information about their patients with diabetes and ask physicians to measure and self-evaluate the quality of care they provide;**
- **Supporting physicians in attaining special recognition through the National Committee for Quality Assurance's (NCQA) Diabetes Physician Recognition Program, including providing financial resources to apply for the certification; and**
- **Providing one-on-one consulting to practice sites to improve office work flows.**

Monroe Plan for Medical Care is leading this initiative that represents approximately 125,800 covered lives, and 8,000 individuals with diabetes in the Monroe County area. Other collaborating stakeholders include:

- **American Diabetes Association**
- **Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield**
- **Monroe County Department of Public Health**
- **New York State Department of Health (the state's Medicaid agency)**
- **Preferred Care**
- **Rochester Business Alliance**