



PQA Convenes an Ad Hoc MACRA Workgroup

PQA convened a multi-stakeholder workgroup in January to begin to address potential opportunities from both a measurement and quality improvement perspective in terms of how pharmacists and pharmacies might play a role in the implementation of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA). The MACRA repeals the Medicare sustainable growth rate (SGR) methodology for updates to the physician fee schedule (PFS) and replaces it with a new approach to payment called the Quality Payment Program that rewards the delivery of high-quality patient care through two avenues: Advanced Alternative Payment Models (Advanced APMs) and the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) for eligible clinicians. These are “Physician-Focused Payment Models”, and do not specify how pharmacists might be engaged.

The goals of the Ad Hoc Work group included:

- 1) Analyze and explore the opportunities for the development and uptake of medication-related quality measures into the MIPS program.
- 2) Analyze and explore the opportunities for pharmacists to engage in Improvement Activities and/or initiatives to improve performance on quality metrics through team-based models of care.
- 3) Consider educational tools and programming that might be beneficial to be offered to pharmacists, and other care providers and stakeholders (health plans, etc.) and how PQA might be able to coordinate/facilitate those efforts across multi-stakeholders.

- 4) Discuss the role of registries in the MIPS program including inclusion of medication-related measures into registries.
- 5) Assess the role of Virtual Groups (for small physician group practices) and whether this presents a unique opportunity for pharmacists (in rural settings and elsewhere) to partner with Virtual Groups.

Twenty-two participants representing all aspects of pharmacy practice as well as organizations representing medical practitioners engaged in lively discussion, and expressed a range of opinions, ideas and suggestions for promoting the role of the pharmacist in the new payment and delivery systems. Some of the ideas to be considered include:

- The best approach to working with medical subspecialists to develop quality measures
- How PQA can develop measures for all clinicians to use to satisfy MACRA requirements for use of Certified Electronic Health Record Technology (CEHRT)
- The role of registries, and whether pharmacists may be able to utilize these registries for patient care
- The challenge of developing an interoperative reporting infrastructure
- Understanding how pharmacists can contribute to enhancing quality and decreasing costs through fulfillment of quality measures and improvement activities
- Educational efforts and tools that should be developed for pharmacists and other clinicians

The Workgroup will provide an opportunity to work together to promote common interests. It will meet quarterly and be multi-disciplinary in nature. The changes brought forth by MACRA can be seen as an opportunity to include pharmacists in delivering higher quality care and PQA looks forward to the input from this workgroup on a quarterly basis.