

Health Quality Innovators at a Glance

Health Quality Innovators (HQI)—formerly known as VHQC—is analytical, methodical and creative. We understand complex government health care programs, excel at implementing change on the front lines, and shine new light on improvement challenges. As an independent, nonprofit consulting organization since 1984, we offer clients practical solutions backed by objectivity and expertise.



Health Care Quality Improvement

HQI equips healthcare professionals in every setting of care with the tools, training and technical assistance they need to address a wide range of quality priorities, from reducing readmissions to preventing infections. We do this by convening providers, patients, families and other stakeholders in collaborative learning networks to share knowledge and take action. We also analyze data, offer improvement resources, deliver training and provide quality coaching.

We conduct much of this work as the Maryland and Virginia Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) and as the regional “boots on the ground” for two major Hospital Improvement Innovation Networks. These initiatives are aligned with national health quality goals, and allow us to deliver federally sponsored services that address nursing home quality, diabetes self-management, cardiac preventive health, care transitions, adverse drug events, healthcare acquired infections, and antibiotic stewardship.

Our quality improvement leadership extends beyond local and regional efforts. HQI recently led two of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ (CMS) five QIO National Coordinating Centers—one focused on spreading health care improvement and a second dedicated to improving population health. We continue to shape the way providers think and talk about improvement as a partner in CMS’s QIO Program Collaboration Center for Integrated Communications.



Physician Practice Transformation

Physicians and other office-based health care professionals count on HQI to help them stay ahead of rapidly changing technology, clinical standards and payment models.

As a CMS Practice Transformation Network (PTN) covering the Mid-Atlantic and a practice facilitation partner in the Heart of Virginia Healthcare initiative funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, HQI is able to provide many of our transformation services to qualifying providers at no charge.

These include developing internal improvement capacity, maximizing electronic health record use, risk-stratifying patient panels for population health management, implementing reimbursable services that include transitional care management, and establishing medical neighborhoods for referring patients to best-value specialists. We also work directly with practices, health systems and independent practice associations.

HQI's expertise in improving office-based care is founded on nearly 15 years of experience, which includes leading national CMS initiatives on electronic health record adoption and use in primary care offices, conducting statewide preventive care initiatives, and serving as one of the country's most successful health information technology Regional Extension Centers.



MACRA Technical Assistance

CMS is shifting Medicare payment from volume to value. The HQI team is uniquely qualified to prepare eligible clinicians for success with this new Quality Payment Program (QPP), which encompasses the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and advanced Alternative Payment Models (APMs).

As a QIN-QIO, HQI is able to advise groups of 16 or more eligible clinicians at no charge. Our services to large practices include timely, accurate information about QPP options, requirements and deadlines; strategies for selecting meaningful, attainable PQRS measures and the right "pace" of MIPS participation; assistance with QPP enrollment; help interpreting CMS performance reports and pinpointing the most productive areas for action; and focused consultation on specific improvement needs.

Years of highly similar work as a QIO and Regional Extension Center means we can assist providers in each of the four areas that comprise the MIPS payment score: reporting quality data, using electronic health records, managing the total cost of care, and participating in improvement activities. As a Practice Transformation Network, HQI also is readying medical groups for APM participation.



EHR Optimization

Electronic health record systems (EHRs) are here to stay. HQI helps physician practices get the most from

them, through services that align technology with care delivery and ensure compliance with federal regulations. We offer readiness assessments for EHR adoption or upgrade, system selection guidance, workflow redesign, best practice gap analysis, privacy and security risk mitigation and contingency planning, and meaningful use audit preparation.

Providers who qualify for enrollment in the Virginia Medicaid EHR Incentive Program can access many of these services free of charge, thanks to funding from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services. HQI also delivers EHR consulting services that are tailored to individual physician practice needs.

HQI's EHR optimization services are an outgrowth of our successful Regional Extension Center, which helped more than 3,000 providers attain meaningful use and receive thousands of dollars in Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments.



Trusted Expertise

HQI's experienced team includes former hospital executives, nursing home administrators and practice managers, as well as nurses, behavioral health clinicians, health information managers, health communicators, pharmacists and physicians.

In addition to their professional degrees, most hold additional credentials, including Certified Professional in Health Quality, Six Sigma Black Belt, PCMH Certified Content Expert, and Project Management Professional. HQI team members who work with physician practices offer a collective knowledge of more than 20 ambulatory EHR systems.