



Healthcentric
Advisors

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QIN-QIO
Quality Innovation Network -
Quality Improvement Organizations
CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES
EQUALITY IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION GROUP



HEALTH EQUITY UPDATES

August 2023



CMS Physician Payment Rule Promotes Health Equity

In July, CMS announced a proposed rule for the 2024 Physician Fee Schedule that includes coding and payment for several new services that will improve care for underserved communities. This includes identifying and addressing unmet health-related social needs (HRSN). Here is a brief summary of the proposed changes:

- Payment for engaging with and training caregivers to support people with Medicare in carrying out their treatment plans.
- Coding and payment for several community health integration services including payment for community health workers.
- Payment for Principal Illness Navigation services to help patients navigate cancer treatment and other serious illnesses.
- Coding and payment for social determinants of health risk assessments.

For comprehensive information on these proposed changes, refer to the CMS Press Release dated July 13, 2023.

Best of CLAS

A tip for implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate services

HHS National CLAS Standards – Standard 4

Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.

- Education and training should be based on sound educational principles for adults, including pre- and post-training assessments, and be conducted by appropriately qualified individuals. Include ways to meet the unique needs of the population, including regular in-services on how and when to access language services.

This Month

National Minority Donor Awareness Month

According to the [Gift of Life Donor Program](#), nearly 100,000 people are awaiting organ transplants, and about 60% are from multicultural communities. The race and ethnicity of the donor and recipient do not need to be the same in order for transplants to be successful. However, long-term success is more likely if the genetic background of donor and recipient is closely matched.

What can you do to help:

- Make the decision to be a donor and register at [RegisterMe.org](#).
- Encourage patients, families, and caregivers, especially racial and ethnic minorities, to become donors.

National Immunization Awareness Month



There are various resources and information on the [IPRO QIN-QIO website](#).

In the News

[Updated City Health Dashboard](#)

The City Health Dashboard recently announced a new data release that includes 67 new small cities, new years of data for 27 metrics across five domains, a new data source for Particulate Matter to measure air pollution, and updates to the API. Two metrics were also removed: the COVID Local Risk Index and Limited Access to Healthy Food. The purpose of the City Health Dashboard is to “help cities and local communities across the country identify challenges and create actionable solutions towards health equity.”

[Harm Reduction Services for Rural Populations](#)

An article in the Rural Information Hub (RHlhub) describes how organizers in rural communities across the country are testing innovative harm reduction strategies in response to increased rates of overdose deaths and injection-related disease. The strategies aim to increase access to potentially life-saving services to more marginalized individuals. An example is a syringe services program that offers safe injection practices, distributes free sterile syringes, provides treatment referrals, and offers free doses of naloxone. The article describes the benefits of harm reduction programs, which often encounter policy barriers and community opposition.

[Optimizing Health and Function as We Age](#)

A new AHRQ report explores ways to optimize health and function for aging adults. The report summarizes recommendations from a team of multidisciplinary experts about how AHRQ can impact the research, dissemination, and implementation of evidence to improve the organization and delivery of healthcare with the goal of optimizing the health, functional status and well-being of the U.S. population as it ages. Participants provided examples of successful models and interventions for improving care delivery for older adults and ways to integrate their voices in the design of new models and programs.

[Shared-Decision Making Reduces Health Expenditures](#)

In a newly published article in Medical Care, researchers found that a 3% increase in high-quality, shared decision-making (SDM) is associated with a 10% reduction in health care expenditures. Racial and ethnic concordance between patients and clinicians increase the reduction, especially among Black patients seen by Black clinicians. The findings may inform policies intended to address disparities in health care and reduce the risk of health care overutilization, as well as strengthen efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. health care workforce.



Visit the IPRO Resource Library: <https://qi-library.ipro.org>

Upcoming Events

[Building the Health Care Workforce America Needs](#)

National Health Equity Grand Rounds
August 8
2:00 PM ET

[Addressing Humans in Crisis with Location-Based Services](#)

American Public Health Association
August 22
2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

[Health-Related Social Needs Affinity Group](#)

IPRO
The second Wednesday of the month, September 2023—February 2024.
First session is September 13.
12:00 – 12:45 PM ET