



CMS NEWS

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Contact: CMS Media Relations
(202) 690-6145

Medicare continues effort to give consumers more information on health care quality

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the first three participants in a program designed to help consumers get more information regarding their local doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers. The Medicare Data Sharing for Performance Measurement program, made possible by the health care law, makes Medicare claims data available, under strict privacy requirements, to groups that HHS certifies as qualified to handle this data and protect patient privacy. These groups will combine Medicare and private insurance data to create comprehensive, useful reports on provider performance.

The three organizations announced today, are:

- Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati
- Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium (serving the Greater Kansas City area in Missouri and Kansas)
- Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation

“These organizations will make quality and cost information more available and easier to understand for the health care systems in their areas,” said Acting CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner. “By allowing these organizations to combine Medicare data with other insurers’ data in public reports, consumers and businesses will have better information on provider performance and providers will have a greater incentive to improve the quality of care.”

To receive certain Medicare claims data, organizations participating in the program must show that they can manage and process consumer-focused data and can prevent breaches of protected health information. The organizations must also show that they are working with private insurers to access other payer data in order to produce comprehensive reports on provider performance.

The program takes important steps to protect the privacy of patients. Information that could identify specific patients will not be publicly released and strong penalties will be in place for misuse of the Medicare data.

With access to provider performance reports, employers and consumer organizations can identify and reward high quality health care providers in their local areas and develop online tools to help consumers and their families make health care choices informed by this useful data.

For more information on CMS' Qualified Entity Program, visit:

<http://www.cms.gov/QEMedicareData/>

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