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Healthcare Quality Watch

Sept/Oct 2019

CMS QIN-QIO Contract Updates

IPRO completed work on a five-year Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) contract known as the 11th Scope of Work (SOW) on July 17, 2019—receiving positive performance evaluations across all contract activities. As one of the organizations selected by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as a Prime Awardee of the Network of Quality Improvement and Innovation Contractor (NQIIC) program, IPRO is able to bid on Task Orders issued by CMS over the next five years. “This designation confirms that IPRO has demonstrated its capability to successfully address CMS’ bold priorities and strategic goals planned over the next five years,” according to IPRO Chief Executive Officer Theodore O. Will. “We’re pleased and grateful for this designation.”

New QIN-QIO contracts are expected to be awarded this fall. In the meantime IPRO is conducting federally-mandated environmental scans in order to assess quality improvement capacity in key areas of opioid use disorders and chronic kidney disease. Activities in the new QIN-QIO contract (the 12th SOW) are expected to focus heavily on supporting quality improvement at skilled nursing facilities and in community coalitions.

IPRO’s Role in Sepsis Initiative Recognized

IPRO’s leadership role in a statewide Stop Sepsis At Home initiative was recognized at a September gala in New York City. The initiative offers patient education tools, a comprehensive training and implementation toolkit, and data-driven analytical support via a provider-accessible portal to agencies and clinicians across New York State. Honored at the gala event was Al Cardillo, President and CEO of the Home Care Association of New York



Quality Improvement Organizations

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State. The Stop Sepsis at Home initiative is led by Cardillo, Amy Bowerman, Executive Director of Senior Net Health, and IPRO Senior Director Sara Butterfield, RN, BSN —Butterfield’s role is Clinical and Education Leader of the initiative. For more information, visit <https://stopsepsisathome.org>.

Journal Credits QIOs with Improving Antibiotic Stewardship

QIN-QIOs are having a positive effect on the nationwide effort to improve the management of antibiotic medications at skilled nursing facilities across the U.S., according to an important article just published in a peer-reviewed clinical journal. According to findings from researchers at the Columbia University School of Nursing, QIN-QIO involvement was associated with improved performance on key measures including restrictions on the use of specific antibiotics, commitment to data collection to assess performance over time, and adherence to clinical practice guidelines. The article assesses performance at 861 nursing homes following publication of a final federal rule on antibiotic stewardship issued in November 2017. That rule requires that skilled nursing facilities have antibiotic stewardship programs in place in order to receive Medicare and Medicaid payments. For more information, visit the website of the *American Journal of Infection Control* at <https://www.ajicjournal.org>.

I PRO Senior Manager Helps Organize Major Meeting

I PRO Assistant Vice President Jennifer Edwards, DrPH, has been asked to help organize an annual meeting of AcademyHealth, one of the nation's premier healthcare policy and research organizations. The 2020 Annual Research meeting, to be held next June, brings together 3,000 stakeholders from across the U.S., with a focus on increasing quality, accessibility, and value in healthcare. AcademyHealth emphasizes the goals of reducing disparities and improving health. For more information regarding organization activities, visit www.academyhealth.org.



Jennifer Edwards, DrPH



2020 Annual Research Meeting

Today's research driving tomorrow's outcomes.



CMS Upgrades Medicare Plan Finder

Billed as the first major upgrade in a decade, the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has announced changes to the Medicare Plan Finder, the tool seniors can use to shop for Medicare Advantage and Part D Plans. With a new mobile-friendly design, the tool permits cost and coverage comparisons with Medigap policies and permits seniors to create personalized lists of drugs to compare to Part D plan offerings. The CMS announcement coincides with the Medicare open enrollment period, which begins October 15. CMS states that it has added 600 new Medicare Advantage plan offerings across the U.S., with premiums declining to their lowest levels in six years. For more information, visit www.cms.gov.

I PRO is a non-profit organization that works with government agencies, providers and consumers to implement innovative programs that bring policy ideas to life. For over 30 years we've made creative use of clinical expertise, emerging technology and data solutions to make the healthcare system work better.



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