

Minnesota's Medicare QIO Results

Improving health care – results from 2005 - 2008

STRATIS HEALTH HAS SERVED AS MINNESOTA'S QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ORGANIZATION (QIO) under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) since the program's inception in the 1970s. QIOs work to improve patient safety and the quality of care delivered to Medicare beneficiaries.

From November 2005 to July of 2008, Stratis Health had great success working with health care providers across the settings of care in Minnesota—hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and home health agencies—helping them achieve excellence in care delivery. Also, we worked to protect Medicare consumers and the Medicare Trust Fund. By accelerating and broadening the impact of quality improvement, our work led to measurable improvements in care for Minnesota's 700,000 Medicare consumers.

Protected Medicare Consumers and the Medicare Trust Fund

Stratis Health has over 35 years experience in conducting medical case review, determining whether services provided were reasonable and medically necessary, were provided in the most appropriate setting, met professionally recognized standards of health care, and were appropriately billed. The learnings from case review were applied to developing quality improvements focused on system-wide changes, bolstering the Minnesota health care community's approach to reducing medical errors, which emphasizes a culture of learning, justice, and accountability.

- ♦ Responded to more than 5,000 Medicare medical record review cases, including beneficiary complaints, coverage and discharge appeals, hospital admissions appeals, and quality of care concerns

Stratis Health supported Medicare consumers in Minnesota by maintaining a helpline—providing callers with information concerning Medicare rights and responsibilities, protections, and various QIO programs and initiatives.

- ♦ Fielded 4,900 help-line calls and performed 2,200 expedited appeals
- ♦ Over 90% of beneficiaries were satisfied with our complaint review process

Medicare is committed to making information about health care performance available to consumers and giving them additional tools for decision-making. Stratis Health



Stratis Health is a nonprofit organization that leads collaboration and innovation in health care quality and safety, and serves as a trusted expert in facilitating improvement for people and communities.

We carry out our mission through initiatives funded by diverse public and private sources, including serving as Minnesota's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization.

CMS relies on its quality improvement organizations to improve the quality of health care for all Medicare consumers.

supported this transparency in health care quality and patient safety by working with all Minnesota hospitals to collect and submit quality data and by offering educational and technical assistance to them on the use of CMS reporting systems and tools.

- + 100% reporting by Prospective Payment System (PPS) hospitals
- + 86% reporting by Critical Access Hospitals (CAH), although not required

Stratis Health worked with hospitals across the state to reduce the incidence of improper fee-for-service inpatient acute care Medicare payments. We conducted data analysis and focused audits, and recommended system changes and improvement strategies.

- + 21.5 to 55.8% reduction in billing errors
- + Providers fine tuned clinical decision making, reduced payment problems, and lowered their compliance risk; which saved Medicare \$1.5 million a year

Assisted Health Care Providers in Achieving Excellence in Care

Stratis Health worked with Minnesota’s nursing homes, home health agencies, hospitals and physician offices to improve clinical quality and safety, as assessed by more than 40 measures. We assisted them in redesigning care processes and transforming organizational culture; and in measuring and improving quality through the use of technology.

Adult primary care clinics. Stratis Health assisted nearly 80 clinics with improving care management practices by advancing the implementation of electronic health records (EHR). By replacing paper medical records with EHR systems, clinics can leverage technology to enhance care management of patients, particularly the chronically ill.

- + 77% of participating clinics implemented an EHR system

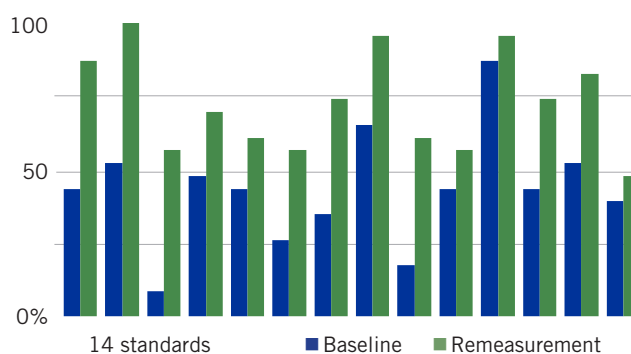
We worked with 23 adult primary care clinics across Minnesota—both urban and rural—to reduce language and cultural barriers to effective health care by engaging physicians and staff to better understand the changing demographics of their patient base and to build more culturally relevant approaches to care delivery into their practices.

- + Statistically significant performance improvement on all 14 national Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards, from baseline to re-measurement, by the participating clinics.

Hospitals. Stratis Health worked with hospitals across the state to improve patient care and data reporting, and to integrate patient safety related technology—such as computer bar codes on patient wristbands and computerized physician orders—into their systems of care to reduce human errors and avoid dangerous medical mistakes.

- + Nation-leading results in quality measures, including 10% improvement statewide in measures of appropriate care in patients with a diagnosis of heart failure, acute myocardial infarction, or pneumonia

Clinics Meeting or Exceeding CLAS Standards



In a 2007 CMS survey, 100 percent of Minnesota health care providers reported that they provide better care because of work with Stratis Health.

CentraCare Clinic, Long Prairie, Minnesota, worked with Stratis Health on **cultural competency**. The clinic hosted six three-hour medical language classes for its staff. Learning Spanish words for body parts and medical conditions enabled staff to better discuss health issues with their Spanish speaking patients.

Lakewood Health Care Center, Staples, Minnesota, reduced its use of **physical restraints** from 12 percent to zero, after participating in Stratis Health’s nursing home technical assistance group. The nursing home focused on person-centered care—assessing residents on an individual basis—and provided a system-wide education program on falls prevention.

Riverwood Healthcare Center, a critical access hospital, implemented the use of bedside medicine verification through an **electronic medication administration record**. This technology improved the hospital’s patient safety measures by flagging and preventing 64 potential medication errors in January 2008—1.7% of orders—in which the patient’s account number did not match the medication.

- ♦ Eight of the nine hospitals assisted made progress toward implementing medication bar coding

By integrating quality improvement processes into organizational culture, Stratis Health promoted an improved safety environment in nine rural critical access hospitals.

- ♦ 2.4% improvement from baseline to remeasurement on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Patient Safety Culture Survey

Nursing homes. To assist Minnesota's approximately 400 nursing homes in creating healthier, more enjoyable communities for their residents, Stratis Health provided quality improvement tools, training, and resources. We helped launch the Minnesota Culture Change Coalition, a coalition of stakeholders in longterm care interested in broadly fostering person-centered care.

- ♦ Supported 53 nursing homes in a collaborative focused on reducing physical restraints, pain, and pressure ulcers; lowering workforce turnover; and moving from an institutional environment to one that is person-centered.
- ♦ 1.7% decrease in pressure ulcer rate for high-risk patients in 53 nursing homes, a statistically significant improvement

Home health agencies. More patients received appropriate care in the comfort of their homes and avoided costly hospital stays due to a close partnership between Stratis Health and a select group of home health agencies.

In addition to providing training and resources on avoidable acute care hospitalization, oral medication management, immunization assessment, and vaccination to Minnesota's approximately 200 home health agencies, Stratis Health supported 62 home health agencies working on clinical quality improvement, focusing on improving the use of telehealth and changing organizational culture to be patient centered and focused on quality.

- ♦ 36% improvement statewide in assessing patients for flu and pneumococcal immunizations
- ♦ 6.3% reduction in avoidable hospitalizations for the 37 agencies focusing on unnecessary rehospitalization, a statistically significant improvement

Achieving the Goals of the QIO Program

Stratis Health effectively and efficiently met or exceeded the goals of the Medicare QIO Program in Minnesota.

- ♦ 96% stakeholder satisfaction for our QIO work—ranking first in the nation for overall satisfaction, according to a 2007 CMS survey

We are well integrated with the Minnesota health care community, have a great depth of knowledge and expertise in improving quality and patient safety, have a strong record of performance for all of our contracts and grants, and have continuously held the QIO contract in Minnesota since the inception of the program.

Stratis Health staff of approximately 60 professionals possesses strong applied research and clinical experience and expertise in continuous quality improvement theory and implementation, biostatistics, data analysis, data management, medical record abstraction, coding, health education, project management,

Contact us for assistance with your quality improvement and patient safety needs.



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