

# Minnesota's Medicare QIO Results

## Improving health care – preliminary results from 2008 - 2011

STRATIS HEALTH HAS SERVED AS MINNESOTA'S QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ORGANIZATION (QIO), developing and implementing evidence-based improvement projects to meet national health care goals, on behalf of 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, focusing on the greatest needs and opportunities for improvement.

With a few months remaining for the 2008-2011 QIO projects, Stratis Health has had great success working with health care providers across settings of care in Minnesota, helping them achieve excellence in care delivery. We also are working to protect Medicare consumers and the Medicare Trust Fund. By accelerating and broadening the impact of quality improvement, our work leads to measurable improvements in care for Minnesota's 780,000 Medicare consumers.

## Protecting Medicare Consumers and the Medicare Trust Fund

Stratis Health has nearly four decades of 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 are applied to developing quality improvements focused on systemwide changes, bolstering the Minnesota health care community's approach to reducing medical errors, which emphasizes a culture of learning, justice, and accountability.

- Responded to nearly 3,500 requests for Medicare medical record reviews, including beneficiary complaints, coverage and discharge appeals, hospital admissions appeals, and quality of care concerns—with 97% of case reviews completed in a timely manner

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 4,450 help-line calls
- Over 90% of beneficiaries were satisfied with our complaint review process



40 years of quality

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.

Medicare is committed to making information about health care performance available to consumers and giving them additional tools for decision-making. Stratis Health supported this transparency in health care quality and patient safety by working with all Minnesota hospitals to collect and submit quality data to [Hospital Compare](#), and by offering educational and technical assistance on the use of CMS reporting specifications, systems, and tools.

- 100% reporting by Prospective Payment System Hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals

We collaborate with the Minnesota Hospital Association to calculate and publish measures of Minnesota hospital performance, including clinical quality and patient experiences of care, on [Minnesota Hospital Quality Reports](#).

### Assisting Health Care Providers in Achieving Excellence in Care

Stratis Health worked with Minnesota clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, and health plans to improve clinical quality and safety, as assessed by more than 40 measures. We provided expert assistance in redesigning care processes and transforming organizational culture, and in measuring and improving quality through the use of technology.

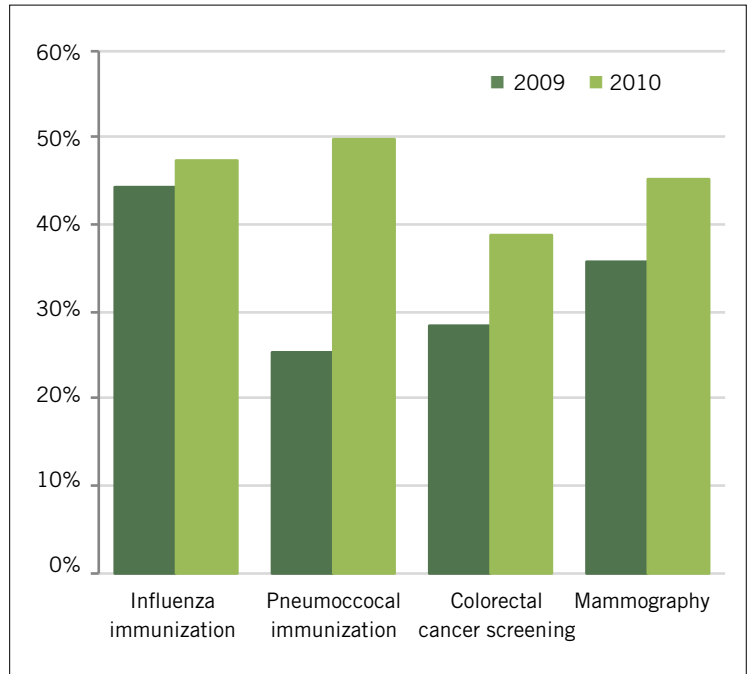
**Adult primary care clinics.** Stratis Health is working with 10 clinics to leverage electronic health record (EHR) systems to support evidence-based practice that will improve preventive health care for Medicare consumers. The clinics modify clinical workflows to achieve greater efficiency with EHRs, fully utilize EHRs to coordinate patient care, and extract and report data from their EHR system to support quality improvement. The clinics achieved two-year target goals within the first year of the project.

- Influenza immunization rates increased from 44.24% to 47.29%
- Pneumococcal immunization rates increased from 25.33% to 49.95%
- Colorectal cancer screening rates increased from 28.30% to 38.96%
- Mammography rates increased from 35.79% to 45.36%

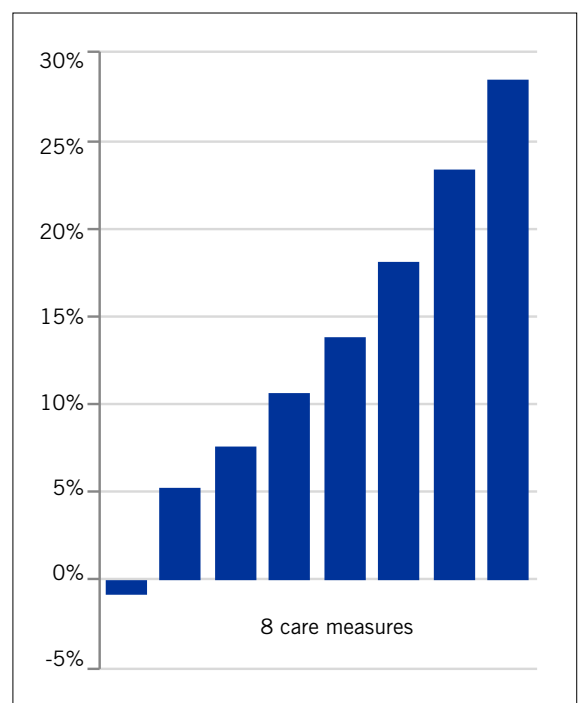
**Hospitals.** Stratis Health has been providing tailored technical assistance to hospitals on clinical quality, teamwork, organizational culture, and leadership. Nine Minnesota hospitals are participating in a project to improve surgical care by reducing surgical complications and improving heart failure treatment. The project focuses on preventing complications in four areas that comprise 40 percent of the most common complications after major inpatient surgery: infection, blood clots, and adverse cardiac and respiratory events.

- Collectively, the hospitals are improving on 7 of 8 measures, exceeding 5 benchmarks

Preventive Screening Rates at Participating Minnesota Clinics



Range of Improvement at Participating Minnesota Hospitals



We are working with two Minnesota hospitals to maintain low methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection rates. Only one hospital-acquired MRSA infection has occurred during the project.

[Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital](#), Grand Rapids, worked with Stratis Health on [improving surgical care](#). Through root cause analysis, the hospital identified how to approach improvements. Its multidisciplinary team developed a “hard-stop” process for discontinuing antibiotics within 24 hours after surgery—resulting in 100% consistency.

After Stratis Health trained [Chippewa County Montevideo Hospital](#) staff to use an evidence-based teamwork system designed to improve [patient safety](#) through better communication and teamwork skills, the hospital implemented a handoff communication tool to ensure pertinent information accompanies patients as their care providers change.

**Nursing homes.** Working with 43 nursing homes to reduce the incidence of pressure ulcers and the use of physical restraints, Stratis Health provided assistance with implementing evidence-based practices, organizational leadership assessment, and support for culture change toward person-centered care.

- ♦ Pressure ulcers rates decreased from 11.27% to 9.08%
- ♦ Use of physical restraints decreased from 4.65% to 1.69%

[Evansville Care Campus](#) has watched its use of [physical restraints](#) diminish over the past few years. Now, nursing home staff uses restraints as a last resort.

[Villa Health Care Center](#), Mora, reduced the incidence of [pressure ulcers](#) for its residents over two years. The facility reduced its rate from 15% down to 2%—well below the state and national average.

Stratis Health provided quality improvement technical assistance to three nursing homes identified by CMS as having a history of serious quality issues. All of the homes have taken steps to improve and have successfully graduated from the CMS special focus facility list or are expected to shortly.

**Health plans.** Stratis Health worked with one Minnesota health plan to improve drug safety by identifying top medications associated with drug-drug interactions (DDIs) and potentially inappropriate medications (PIMs) in the elderly, then developing educational and system strategies with providers, pharmacies, and care coordinators to address these medications.

- ♦ Far exceeded improvement goals. Its DDI and PIM rates improved faster than the rates of other Minnesota health plans.

## Achieving the Goals of the QIO Program

The current QIO work began on August 1, 2008, and continues through July 31, 2011. Stratis Health is privileged to continue serving as Minnesota’s Medicare QIO in the next scope of work, starting August 1, 2011.

Stratis Health effectively and efficiently worked with providers and health care organizations to meet the performance targets set by CMS for these Medicare QIO projects. Our success as the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Minnesota stems from being well integrated with the Minnesota health care community, working collaboratively to effect change, and having a great depth of knowledge and expertise in improving quality and patient safety.

We lead and support health care quality in Minnesota and nationally—at the provider, community, and population levels, and across the full continuum of health care. In both clinical and non-clinical areas, Stratis Health sits at the intersection of research, policy, and practice. At its core, our work helps providers translate evidence-based research and guidelines into practice to improve quality, advance prevention and wellness, and foster safe and person-centered care.

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



2901 Metro Drive, Suite 400  
Bloomington, MN 55425-1525

(952) 854-3306 telephone

(952) 853-8503 fax

1-877-STRATIS (1-877-787-2847) toll-free

info@stratishealth.org

(9SOW-MN-GEN-02 041411)

[www.stratishealth.org](http://www.stratishealth.org)