

# Health Care Quality Watch

MONTHLY NEWS BRIEFS FOR MANAGERS AND OPINION LEADERS

ISO  
9001:2000  
CERTIFIED

**“A one-stop tool” is how Lenore Paterno, Director of Cardiac Rehabilitation Services at St. John’s Riverside Hospital, Yonkers describes *Joint Effort New York (JENY)*.** A new online forum that encourages open sharing of best practices in order to stimulate health care quality improvement in New York State, JENY is administered by IPRO, New York’s quality improvement organization. Although it just started in August, the innovative site (<http://jeny.ipro.org>) has nearly 1,000 users from throughout the state’s health care community. More than half of the state’s hospitals already participate. The site includes a range of interactive areas that users can participate in. The *Main Conference Hall* houses the general work and knowledge of the community. Features include an information booth and help desk, conference call schedule, archives and general discussion area on quality improvement. *Breakout Rooms* go in-depth on specific topics as part of structured collaboratives run by IPRO. These include such topics as cardiac care, smoking cessation, infectious disease and nursing home and home health quality. *Café Melior* provides a less formal way for community members to share ideas, chat off-topic and get to know one another. The site also includes a

*Member List, Calendar and FAQ.* For more information, or to participate in the JENY community, please visit <http://jeny.ipro.org>.

**IPRO has a limited number of seats available at our Lake Success, NY offices to view an educational broadcast explaining a consumer-friendly approach to disseminating comparative hospital data.**

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is planning a satellite broadcast in March to explain the forthcoming launch of the online, *Hospital Compare* performance report, due for rollout this spring. The satellite broadcast, scheduled for March 10 from 1 pm to 3 pm, will outline the goals of the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA), a public-private collaboration led by CMS, the American Hospital Association, the Federation of American Hospitals and the Association of American Medical Colleges. Under the Alliance, participating hospitals report voluntarily on a starter set of 10 clinical quality measures. For additional information regarding HQA, visit [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov). To register for IPRO’s hosting of the satellite broadcast, contact Claudette Steele at IPRO at 516-326-7767, ext. 588.

**Last summer, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched a four-state pilot project, *DOQ-IT* (Doctor’s Office Quality-Information Technology), aimed at promoting Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and other health information technology advances in the ambulatory care setting.** The pilot was designed to help physician practices assess their readiness to purchase and implement EHRs, provide impartial information about EHR system selection, and help with office workflow redesign to optimize use of EHR systems and to improve the quality of healthcare delivery. CMS has expanded the project, asking each state’s Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) to set the stage locally for a national *DOQ-IT* initiative. Currently, IPRO is working with a small number of New York State physician practices, in anticipation of a significant QIO role helping physician offices implement EHRs as part of the 8th Scope of Work contract, which begins August 1, 2005. For additional information on the *DOQ-IT* project at IPRO, contact Alan Silver, MD, MPH at 516-209-5509 (e-mail: [asilver2@nyqio.sdps.org](mailto:asilver2@nyqio.sdps.org)) or Anthony Shih, MD, MPH at 516-209-5429 (e-mail: [ashih@nyqio.sdps.org](mailto:ashih@nyqio.sdps.org)). For more information on the national

initiative, visit [www.dogit.org](http://www.dogit.org) and <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/quality/pfqi.asp>.

**Vytra Health Plans of New York City and Long Island scored significantly better than the statewide average for five of six Medicaid indicators in 2003, according to the latest edition of the managed care performance report issued annually by the New York State Department of Health.**

The percentage of Vytra's Medicaid managed care providers who are board certified in primary care and obstetrics/gynecology is significantly above the statewide average, as is the percentage of Medicaid enrollees who say they're satisfied with personal doctors or nurses, with specialists and with overall provider communication. Information regarding the state's *2004 Managed Care Plan Performance: A Report on Quality, Access to Care, and Consumer Satisfaction*, is available by contacting the Department of Health's Office of Managed Care at 518-473-7684. The report is available online at [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us) in a format that permits regional comparisons.

**The United Hospital Fund is creating a series of online briefing papers addressing the need for standardized measurement and reporting of quality information and the need to assure comparability among competing health information systems.** The January 2005 edition of UHF's Qual-IT Newsletter documents a number of public/private collabora-

tions that focus on IT interoperability, including the National Committee for Vital and Health Statistics' ambulatory e-prescribing standards; the Massachusetts Medical Society's online "continuity of care records"; the Institute of Medicine's report and draft standards; and the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare's promotion of business rules supporting benefit and eligibility information exchange. For more information about the newsletter, contact UHF's Quality Strategies Initiative at [www.uhfnyc.org/quality](http://www.uhfnyc.org/quality).

**The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has selected ten group practices accounting for 5,000 physicians and 200,000 Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries to participate in a three-year "pay for performance" initiative that will test a number of disease and case management strategies.** Mandated by Congress, the Physician Group Practice Demonstration will offer bonuses to groups that can simultaneously reduce costs and improve quality for Medicare beneficiaries. The 32 quality measures, developed by the American Medical Association and the National Committee for Quality Assurance, address the management of diabetes, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease as well as preventive care measures such as breast and colorectal cancer screening. The ten physician groups are located in Connecticut, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North

Carolina, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin and include the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Clinic, the Geisinger Health System and Park Nicollet Health Services. For more information, visit [www.cms.hhs.gov/researchers/demos/PGP.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/researchers/demos/PGP.asp).

**The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) will post proposed changes to its Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) to the NCQA Web site later this month.**

From February 22 through March 22, the organization seeks feedback on the new measures – and changes to existing measures – it proposes to incorporate into HEDIS® 2006. Review documents will be available for viewing at [www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org). NCQA is also looking for volunteers to field test potential measures; that project gets underway at the end of April. For more information on the upcoming public comment period and the reevaluation and field testing initiative, call NCQA's Customer Support line, 888-275-7585.

*Health Care Quality Watch* is published monthly by IPRO's **Department of Communications & Corporate Development**. IPRO is a not-for-profit organization that works with public and private sector clients to analyze and improve the quality of health care. For further information, contact:

**IPRO**

1979 Marcus Avenue  
Lake Success, NY 11042  
telephone 516-326-7767 ext. 588  
or visit us online at

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