



# Health Care Quality Watch

MONTHLY NEWS BRIEFS FOR MANAGERS AND OPINION LEADERS

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**A toolbox aimed at increasing rates of immunization among nursing home residents and employees is now available from a national association of long-term care physicians.** The influenza and pneumococcal pneumonia immunization tool kits developed by the American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) address strategies to overcome barriers to increase vaccinations, how to develop facility-wide policies, how to handle vaccine shortages and how to handle illness outbreaks. The tool kit includes a CD-ROM and DVD and is endorsed by national long-term care organizations including the American Association of Homes and Services of the Aging and the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform. To order a tool kit, visit AMDA at [www.amda.com](http://www.amda.com).

**Two nationally recognized leaders in U.S. health care policy have joined the Board of Directors of the American Health Quality Association (AHQA), the Washington, DC-based trade group that represents Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) like IPRO.** Francois de Brantes is currently the National Coordinator for *Bridges to Excellence*, a program that recognizes physician leadership in quality improvement. Before that he was Program Leader for health care initiatives at GE. Barbara Paul, MD, is national medical advisor to Community Health Systems, a Tennessee-based acute care hospital operator. Previously Dr. Paul held major positions at Beverly Enterprises and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). At CMS, Dr. Paul had a leadership role in launching public reporting initiatives addressing nursing home, home health

and hospital quality performance. Public Directors of the AHQA Board may serve terms of up to six years.

**IPRO and eDaptive Systems will partner in a strategic alliance that offers IT industry solutions to meet the requirements of public and private sector clients.** The venture links the expertise of eDaptive Systems, an 8(a), Veteran-owned computer services firm, with IPRO's extensive technical resources and experience in meeting the objectives of government-sponsored health care programs. Both IPRO and eDaptive Systems have extensive experience in managing and controlling access to sensitive data and in deploying IT solutions that comply with federally mandated security regulations, including HIPAA. The alliance offers clients a unique and proven strategy for achieving program objectives, with a wide range of technical expertise to support information management, data management, IT systems development and security. "This partnership will enable us to enhance our offerings to federal and state agencies and health care companies," said Richard A. Alfieri, Chief Information Officer, IPRO, in announcing the agreement. "eDaptive brings a depth of expertise and an innovative approach that will enable us to offer a full suite of IT services moving forward." For additional information, visit [www.edaptivesys.com](http://www.edaptivesys.com) and [www.ipro.org](http://www.ipro.org), or call Rich Alfieri at 516-326-7767, ext. 651.

**Medicare base payments to providers should be reduced, with sufficient funds set aside to implement meaningful but budget-neutral Pay-For-Performance**

**programs over the next three to five years, according a report from a special panel convened by the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine in Washington, DC.** The IOM report recommends that Congress set aside funding to reward high-performing providers, including hospitals, nursing homes, Medicare Advantage plans, dialysis facilities, home health agencies and physicians. Ultimately, the panel wants Congress to give the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to develop a single pool of incentive funding to be awarded in a way that maximizes coordination of care across settings. The panel recommends testing the set-aside approach first, rather than funding performance programs on the basis of efficiencies achieved. The IOM report finds that such efficiencies are, as yet, largely unproven. For a copy of the report, "Rewarding Provider Performance," the third in the series *Pathways to Quality Health Care*, contact the National Academies Press at [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu).

**The United States lags far behind a number of European nations in the percentage of physicians who say they use electronic medical records.** While the proportion of physicians in Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom who report that they use EMRs is 90%, 88%, 62% and 58%, respectively, the proportion of physicians in the U.S. who report use of this technology is only 17%. These findings are included in a report released this fall by the Commonwealth Fund that measures U.S. health care performance against other nations for a number of measures addressing out-

comes, quality, access, efficiency and equity. Only four Western industrial nations surveyed have lower percentages of physicians who say they use EMRs in everyday practice. Those nations are Canada (14%), Spain (9%), France (6%) and Portugal (5%). For a copy of *Why Not the Best? Results from a National Scorecard on U.S. Health System Performance*, contact The Commonwealth Fund at [www.cmwf.org](http://www.cmwf.org).

**The New York State Department of Health's landmark Hospital Profile Web site has served nearly 76,000 unique visitors, with well over three million total pages views, since its debut in January of this year.** The site, which offers consumer-friendly quality performance data and hospital characteristic information on all acute care hospitals in New York, was refreshed in late October with the latest data available. The quality performance information on management of acute myocardial infarction, pneumonia and heart failure, which is derived from data collected under Medicare, now reflects the one-year time period ending in December 2005. The information on how often each hospital performs a given procedure or surgery has also been updated to reflect data through the end of 2005. Information on hospital characteristics is updated based on semi-annual hospital surveys conducted by DOH. To visit the site, go to <http://hospitals.nyhealth.gov>.

**The Massachusetts experience in the effort to cover the uninsured is the topic of the keynote address at the Seventeenth Annual Symposium on Health Care Services in New York, to be held November 16th at the City University of New York's Graduate School and University Center in Manhattan.** Sponsored by the Greater New York Hospital Association Foundation and the United Hospital Fund, the event's keynote address will be offered by Jonathan Gruber, PhD, Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A morning session on

Patient Safety and the *100K Lives* Campaign will feature Rachel Block, Project Director, Quality Strategies Initiative, United Hospital Fund; Terri Straub, RN, MBA, Vice President, Quality and Patient Safety at Greater New York Hospital Association; and Van Dunn, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President of Clinical Affairs, New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. For more information, contact Hollis Holmes at 212-494-0761 or [hholmes@ubfnyc.org](mailto:hholmes@ubfnyc.org).

**"Fundamental Principles of Culture Change and Depression in Long Term Care" is the theme of IPRO's fall series of educational conferences for the nursing home community.** Presented in five locations statewide, the conferences address culture change and its application, with a particular focus on employing culture change to drive improvement of performance on the Depression Quality Measure. Topics include: "What is Culture Change?"; "Leadership Development and Staff Empowerment"; "Failure of the Medical Model"; and "What Does Depression Look Like?" Presenters include G. Allen Power, MD and Susan Berta, RN, LNHA. The program has been approved for 6 CEU clock hours (NAB/NCERS) for Licensed Nursing Home Administrators. The full-day sessions begin at 8:00 am and conclude at 4:30 pm; conference fee is \$50.00. Three dates remain: Tuesday, November 28th at the Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown; Wednesday, November 29th at the Long Island Huntington Hilton, Melville; and Tuesday, December 12th at the Hilton Garden Inn, Buffalo. Registration is available online at [www.ipro.org](http://www.ipro.org). For more information, contact IPRO NHQI Director Pauline Kinney, [pkkinney@nyqio.sdps.org](mailto:pkkinney@nyqio.sdps.org), or call 516-326-7767, extension 402.

**The national Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) partnership has announced an increased emphasis on consumer engagement, in addition to its ongoing work with hospitals and other health care providers.** More than

40 million operations are performed in the United States each year. Many of these operations are complicated by infection, blood clots, and heart problems, among other adverse events. These complications take a toll not only on the patients, but also on the overall cost of health care in New York and across the country. A significant percentage of these complications are preventable, and it is the goal of the SCIP initiative to use evidence-based measures to reduce preventable surgical complications nationwide by 25 percent by 2010. "SCIP is combining the expertise of key health care organizations and agencies across New York State and now is taking steps to include patients and other consumers in improving the care they receive," said Clare B. Bradley, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer, IPRO. "This is a unique approach that can make a profound difference in the quality of surgery New York State patients can expect to receive." IPRO is working with New York State hospitals to advance the SCIP initiative with focused quality improvement interventions, regional conferences, face-to-face meetings with hospital staff, educational conference calls and sharing of best practice information. Groups such as the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS), Greater New York Hospital Association and the United Hospital Fund are working closely with IPRO on the initiative. For more information on SCIP consumer and provider outreach, visit [www.ipro.org](http://www.ipro.org).

*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:

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