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HQA Recaps Accomplishments, Readies Measures Review Transfer

Washington, DC – The Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA), the nation’s first and foremost organization for developing and reporting “apples-to-apples” hospital quality information, today recapped its accomplishments while readying the transfer of the quality measure review processes to the Measures Application Partnership (MAP).

“The HQA has transformed the way patients and consumers get information on hospital quality of care,” said Rich Umbdenstock, chairman of the HQA and president and chief executive officer of the American Hospital Association. “Hospitals are proud of their efforts to be even more transparent and effective for the patients and communities they serve and look forward to working with the MAP to continue making progress in these efforts.”

Founded in 2002, the HQA’s mission has been to implement measures that portray the quality, cost and value of hospital care, and to make meaningful hospital performance information available to the public. Specific HQA accomplishments include:

- Creating the nation’s first multi-stakeholder private/public organization dedicated to developing, reporting and updating information about hospital quality performance, and encouraging efforts to improve hospital quality. The multi-stakeholder HQA measure review model served as the template for other quality alliances and was incorporated in provisions in the Affordable Care Act that led to the formation of the MAP.
- Advising CMS on the creation and development of *Hospital Compare*, (<http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov/>) the nation’s broadest compendium of publicly available, internet accessible and comparable national hospital quality measures. *Hospital Compare* currently reports on more than 50 performance measures for inpatient and outpatient care and allows the public and health care providers to compare the performance of more than 4,500 hospitals across the nation.

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- Catalyzing adoption of the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS), the nation's first standardized survey for measuring patients' perceptions of their hospital care.
- Introducing the nation's first measures of surgical site infections.

Due to the efforts of the HQA and its members, virtually all of the 10 core measures that the HQA first put forward now are above 95 percent compliance. CMS deems many HQA-approved measures as appropriate for inclusion in Medicare's payment requirements. The HQA's processes have advanced the quality agenda and facilitated continuous improvement in patient care by evaluating, recommending and reporting, on an ongoing basis, hospital performance assessment measures.

"The HQA pioneered national public reporting of hospital quality information and worked closely with CMS in an effort to make the measures reported on the *Hospital Compare* website meaningful and useful to patients, purchasers and providers," stated Gerry Shea, HQA vice-chair and assistant to the president at the AFL-CIO.

In 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), under provisions of the Affordable Care Act, designated the MAP, convened by the National Quality Forum (NQF), to advise the agency about selecting performance measures for public reporting and performance-based payment programs. Consequently, the HQA is transitioning its hospital quality measure review processes to the MAP. This transition is expected to take place before December 31, 2011, after which the HQA will cease operations, although individual HQA member organizations will continue their active participation in processes to develop, evaluate and implement health care performance measures.

"The MAP greatly appreciates the HQA's role in advancing the quality agenda, and looks forward to the continuing engagement of the HQA's various member organizations in the MAP process," said Tom Valuck, M.D., J.D., senior vice president for strategic partnerships at the NQF and staff lead for the MAP.

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About the HQA

In December 2002, the organizations representing America's hospitals joined with consumer representatives, physician and nursing organizations, employers and payers, oversight organizations and government agencies to launch the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA). The HQA is a national public-private collaboration that is committed to making meaningful, relevant,

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and easily understood information about hospital performance accessible to the public and to informing and encouraging efforts to improve quality.

The HQA believes that the availability and use of clinical quality, patient experience, equity, efficiency, and pricing information will spur positive changes in health care delivery. A cornerstone of our collaboration is Hospital Compare (www.HospitalCompare.hhs.gov) which publicly reports hospital performance in a consistent, unified manner to ensure the availability of credible information about the care delivered in the nation's hospitals.

HQA Member Organizations

AARP

AFL-CIO

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)

American Hospital Association (AHA)

American Medical Association (AMA)

American Nurses Association (ANA)

Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project (CPDP)

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Federation of American Hospitals (FAH)

The Joint Commission (TJC)

National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI)

National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (NAPH)

National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH)

National Quality Forum (NQF)

Society of Critical Care Medicine

U. S. Chamber of Commerce

Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality

Additional Quotes from HQA Leadership

“Over the past decade, the work of the HQA has helped patients and physicians by improving health quality measurement in hospitals across our nation,” said J. James Rohack, M.D., American Medical Association Representative on the HQA. “The AMA is pleased to have been involved in this important public and private sector collaboration, and we will continue to use the work of the HQA to guide our ongoing efforts to improve the health and safety of patients.”

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“The HQA stakeholders came to consensus on complex quality measurement issues to improve patient safety, other key quality outcomes, and reduce cost, which are so important to the patients, families, caregivers, and communities that hospitals serve, stated Marla Weston, PhD, RN, CEO of the American Nurses Association.”

"The National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems appreciates the opportunity to have been a part of the community of committed stakeholders that encourages voluntary public reporting of performance data," said Dr. Bruce Siegel, President and Chief Executive Officer. "The groundwork laid by HQA has been critical in fostering the growing culture of transparency, facilitating hospitals' performance improvement efforts, and enabling patients to access the tools necessary to become more informed consumers of health care."