

What is a Hospital Quality Improvement Contractor (HQIC) Initiative?

The Hospital Quality Improvement Contractor (HQIC) initiative is a new four-year program by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). It builds on the achievements of previous CMS hospital-based quality improvement initiatives and the Hospital Improvement Innovation Network (HIIN), with a keen focus to improve patient safety, quality and outcomes in rural, critical access and vulnerable populations.

CMS has contracted with TMF Health Quality Institute for this initiative to work with 300 hospitals across the United States.

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE HQIC?

The initiative's intent is to provide targeted quality improvement assistance to rural and critical access hospitals, as well as hospitals serving vulnerable and underserved populations to achieve measurable outcomes with a focus on patient safety, care transitions and opioids. The initiative also provides support to hospitals during public health emergencies, epidemics, pandemics and other crises as they arise.

The HQIC initiative will focus on three CMS goals, which align with the CMS Rural Health Strategy:

Goal 1: Improve behavioral health outcomes, with a focus on decreased opioid misuse

Goal 2: Increase patient safety, with a focus on reduction of harm

Goal 3: Increase the quality of care transitions, with a focus on high utilizers in an effort to improve overall utilization

WHY SHOULD YOUR FACILITY JOIN THE HQIC?

This initiative is free to participants and designed to support rural and critical access hospitals, as well as hospitals serving vulnerable and underserved populations. Since hospitals risk losing reimbursement for failure to achieve quality goals, such as reduced readmissions, harm prevention and adherence to evidence-based best practices, this initiative is designed to help hospitals develop processes, improve in the designated measures and collaborate with peer facilities to share and receive knowledge that can help them avoid these costly penalties. Additionally, the initiative offers support to hospitals for COVID-19 and other public health emergencies. TMF will proactively develop regional networks to support the work of increasing hospital preparedness, working collaboratively with providers and communities and regional partners to ensure an agile response and safe care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHY SHOULD I WORK WITH TMF HEALTH QUALITY INSTITUTE?

TMF has over 30 years of experience in supporting hospitals in large-scale quality improvement efforts, particularly in rural communities. TMF has worked with hundreds of hospitals to achieve and sustain each of the goals associated with different federal and state initiatives. TMF has many years of experience with CMS quality and safety initiatives, including the previous HIIN program and is currently under contract with CMS as a Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization. TMF has the necessary partnerships, resources and staff to support quality improvement initiatives focused on achieving high-quality outcomes in the hospital setting and across the care continuum. Our team includes subject matter experts with the in-depth knowledge to lead collaborative efforts that yield systematic health care quality improvements.

WHAT WILL BE THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF TMF'S APPROACH?

TMF uses a strategy that is tailored to meet the needs of your organization. This ranges from a high-touch approach to participating in Learning and Action Networks for performance improvement. TMF will provide highly respected subject matter experts to delve into each of the clinical areas and teach specific strategies for improvement. TMF provides educational sessions to teach evidence-based best practices, strategies for improvement and tactical interventions proven to reduce harm and readmissions. Hospitals have the opportunity to participate in Learning and Action Networks that bring together health care professionals, patients and other stakeholders around evidence-based, action-oriented agendas to achieve rapid, wide-scale health improvements.



WHAT SETS TMF'S APPROACH APART?

TMF's overall strategy is to help hospitals become high reliability organizations (HROs) as framework for success in preventing harm and ensuring patient safety. Partnering with TMF will provide hospitals with access to tools and resources from a national leader on high reliability expertise, Safe & Reliable Healthcare, LLP (S&R). To better understand disparities and key social determinants of health related to the goals, TMF has also partnered with Carrot Health to provide social determinants of health data that will be used to tailor interventions to local needs. Carrot Health is a leader in the application of consumer data, and has developed risk models predictive of key outcomes, including hospital admissions, readmissions, emergency department visits, adverse drug events, opioid dependency and chronic health conditions. Participating hospitals will benefit from this experience in addition to TMF's expertise with patient and family engagement methodologies, providing customized technical assistance, actionable data, analytics support, and a deep understanding of rural communities and vulnerable populations to achieve positive and sustainable improvements across the board.

WHAT KIND OF REPORTING BURDEN WILL I EXPERIENCE IF I JOIN?

The data-reporting burden is limited. Even though there are several measures, all of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) data is automated and participants who confer rights to share this data with TMF will benefit from this automation of certain outcome measures.

If your hospital does not report hospital-acquired infection data from the CDC/NHSN, your hospital will be able to upload simple numerator and denominator information into TMF's web-based data collection tool for the duration of the reporting timeframe. All measure data will be displayed in member dashboards that will make data integration easier and allow for meaningful comparisons and benchmarking.

HOW WILL TMF DETERMINE MY HOSPITAL'S IMPROVEMENT NEEDS?

TMF will employ an evidence-based approach known as Safety, Culture, Operational, Reliability and Engagement (SCORE) high reliability survey assessment developed by S&R and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. SCORE is the field's most valid, evidence-based and outcomes-predictive HRO survey assessment. In use across more than 700 health care organizations, SCORE delivers diagnostic and actionable insights to guide measurable and meaningful transformation. SCORE is often used as a stand-alone HRO assessment, identifying broad themes and specific opportunities and areas for action. TMF will work with you to use your hospital's data to help direct your improvement efforts over the course of this four-year program. Our team consists of clinicians, quality improvement experts and industry leaders who can guide and facilitate discussions, assessments, evaluations and implementations.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

The Hospital Quality Improvement Contractor (HQIC) initiative is four years. Your hospital's agreement to participate implies that your hospital will commit to be an active participant through 2024.

WILL TMF PROVIDE MONEY TO MY HOSPITAL TO PARTICIPATE IN HQIC?

The program guidelines do not allow hospitals to receive payment for their participation. However, TMF will provide your hospital with extensive technical assistance, access to subject matter experts, data collection, analytic support, reporting tools, access to an online best practices community and education allowing you to customize activities to meet the needs of your hospital. Essentially, you receive free consulting support for the duration of the program.

IS THERE A COST FOR MY HOSPITAL TO JOIN THE HQIC?

No, there is no cost for your hospital to participate.

CAN I STILL PARTICIPATE IF I DID NOT WORK ON PREVIOUS CMS CONTRACTS?

Yes. TMF encourages any qualifying hospital to join, regardless of prior participation in previous government contracts or projects.

CAN I SIGN A LETTER OF PARTICIPATION FOR MORE THAN ONE HQIC?

A hospital can only work with one HQIC, so hospitals will have to choose one partner in this work.

WHAT DOES TMF NEED FROM MY HOSPITAL?

To participate, those interested need to sign a letter of participation (LOP). Please email TMF at hqic@tmf.org to receive a LOP.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Please contact TMF directly at 512-334-1642 or hqic@tmf.org.



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