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**Ambulatory Care Quality Alliance Announces Pilot Project:  
Six Sites Will Combine Public and Private Data on Physician Practice**

*AQA Initiative Will Provide Meaningful Data on  
Physician Practice for Consumers and Purchasers of Health Care*

(Washington, DC) – The Ambulatory Care Quality Alliance (AQA) today announced six sites for a pilot project that will, for the first time, combine public and private information to measure and report on physician practice in a meaningful and transparent way for consumers and purchasers of health care.

The pilot project will be supported with funding from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

“Consumers need and want more useful information to get better care at a lower cost,” said Mark McClellan, CMS administrator. “Thanks to strong local leadership and a broad national partnership, this pilot project will bring together information from the private and public sectors to provide a clear picture of quality and cost for the ambulatory care providers in a region.”

Until recently, one roadblock to measuring and reporting of performance at the physician level has been that it is conducted piecemeal. Physicians with patients covered by various public and private programs have their performance measured separately, often against different sets of measures, for each group.

Clearly, a more comprehensive view of physician practice is needed, but until now no mechanism existed to aggregate data from various sources. The pilot announced today will test approaches to aggregating and reporting data on physician performance.

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The pilot will not only measure care quality, but will identify those high quality providers who are able to deliver efficient care to patients, avoiding unnecessary complications and costs.

It is expected that the results of this pilot will provide a national framework for performance measurement and public reporting.

This pilot project will also test the most effective methods to provide consumers with meaningful information that they can use to make choices about which physicians and physician groups will best meet their needs.

“AHRQ is very pleased to help support this pilot project which will help set the stage for effective, useful reporting of physician practice and performance,” said AHRQ Director Carolyn Clancy, M.D. “We also are pleased to be a partner in the AQA, which represents a unique example of leadership by and collaboration among physician organizations, consumer representatives, employers, health plans, government agencies, and other important stakeholders.”

AQA is a broad based national coalition of more than 125 organizations that seeks to improve health care quality through a process in which key stakeholders agree on a strategy for measuring, reporting, and improving performance at the physician level. These 125 organizations represent physicians, consumers, employers, government, health insurance plans, and accrediting and quality organizations.

The organizations selected by AQA as initial pilot sites are the following:

California Cooperative Healthcare Reporting Initiative, San Francisco CA  
Indiana Health Information Exchange, Indianapolis, IN  
Massachusetts Health Quality Partners, Watertown MA  
Minnesota Community Measurement, St. Paul, MN  
Phoenix Regional Healthcare Value Measurement Initiative, Phoenix, AZ  
Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality, Madison WI

These organizations represent areas of the country where there is strong physician leadership, and where there is a rich history of collaboration on quality and data initiatives among multiple health plans and physician groups. The six coalitions have the necessary infrastructure and experience to support combining public and private data and to get the pilots up and running within a short time frame.

Increasingly, there has been an interest in measuring the performance of individual practitioners against evidence-based standards as a way of encouraging and fostering continuous improvement. AQA, founded in 2004, last year endorsed a starter set of 26 standard performance measures that are now being incorporated in physician contracts and implemented around the country.

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