



Rural Quality Improvement Technical Assistance (RQITA)

About RQITA

RQITA's goal is to improve quality and health outcomes in rural communities through technical assistance to beneficiaries of Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) quality initiatives, which are focused on quality measure reporting and improvement:

- Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Grantees (Rural Quality Program)
- Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Program, including the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP)
- Intended to add expertise related to quality reporting and improvement, not to replace technical assistance support already in place.
- Funded through a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) FORHP cooperative agreement to Stratis Health, initially awarded 2015-2018, and awarded again for 2018-2023.
- For more information about the RQITA project, visit the [Stratis Health RQITA webpage](#).
- Learn more about the team by reviewing the [RQITA Team Biographies](#).

About Stratis Health

Stratis Health is an independent nonprofit with more than 50 years of furthering the organizational mission to collaborate and innovate to improve health. For more information about Stratis Health, visit the [Stratis Health website](#).

- Nationally recognized experts in rural health quality; longstanding trusted relationships with rural providers, critical access hospitals (CAHs), state offices of rural health, and FORHP.
- Other federal roles include serving as a Medicare Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) and as a partner in the FORHP funded [Rural Health Value](#) team.
- Through RQITA, Stratis Health works to implement technical assistance to support quality reporting and improvement, collaborating with FORHP and other partners, including:
 - Technical Assistance and Services Center (TASC)
 - Flex Monitoring Team (FMT)
 - State Flex Programs
 - Georgia Health Policy Center (Rural Quality Program technical assistance provider)

MBQIP Tools and Resources

MBQIP tools and resources are posted on the [TASC MBQIP webpage](#). Some key resources include:

- [MBQIP Fundamentals Guide for State Flex Programs](#): Intended to help state Flex Program personnel and relevant subcontractors understand the basics of MBQIP, including current state and history of the program, as well as key resources available to support them in their work.
- [MBQIP Monthly](#): Monthly e-newsletter that provides CAHs with information and support for quality reporting and improvement.
- [MBQIP Quality Reporting Guide](#): Helps Flex coordinators, CAH staff, and others involved with MBQIP understand the measure reporting process. For each reporting channel, information is included on how to register for the submission site, which measures are reported to the site, and how to submit those measures to the site.
- [Quality Improvement Basics Course](#): A series of recordings and related resources designed to equip professionals (state Flex programs, CAHs, emergency medical service personnel, etc.) with the knowledge and tools to start quality improvement projects at their organizations. The course may be completed in sequence or individual modules and tools may be used for stand-alone training and review.
- [Quality Time: Sharing PIE \(performance improvement experience\)](#): Recorded conversations in a podcast format featuring skilled CAH quality improvement staff from across the country sharing lessons and key themes that help drive quality improvement in their hospitals.
- [Quality Improvement Implementation Guide and Toolkit for CAHs](#): Offers strategies and resources to help CAH staff organize and support efforts to implement best practices for quality improvement.
- [MBQIP Data Reporting Reminders](#): Reminders of upcoming data submission deadlines for MBQIP measures, posted monthly for Flex staff to cut and paste into their state CAH communications as appropriate.
- [MBQIP Measure Fact Sheets](#): One-page summaries of all MBQIP required measures.

Additional support

- [MBQIP Virtual Knowledge Groups](#): A facilitated forum for state Flex Program personnel and subcontractors to share quality reporting and improvement successes, discuss challenges, and brainstorm strategies to assist hospitals toward reporting, improving, and excelling in quality.
- **MBQIP Individualized Technical Assistance and Consultations**: RQITA team members are available for one-on-one discussions with Flex staff and/or MBQIP subcontractors to help support state level implementation (email RQITA staff directly or reach out to tasc@ruralcenter.org to get connected).
- **MBQIP Orientation Sessions**: RQITA offers orientation sessions for new state Flex staff, which are typically facilitated in follow up to orientation with the TASC team. These orientation sessions are also available for state Flex staff and MBQIP subcontractors upon request. Email tasc@ruralcenter.org to get connected.

- **Quality Training and Presentations**: RQITA team members are available to present at webinars and/or in-person training events and workshops.

MBQIP Technical Assistance Requests

Process for MBQIP technical assistance requests/questions:

- CAHs are encouraged to contact their [state Flex Program](#) as first line of MBQIP support.
- Flex Coordinators should direct MBQIP questions to TASC, tasc@ruralcenter.org. TASC serves in “triage” role to respond and resolve or forward to RQITA or FORHP as appropriate.
- TASC and RQITA have processes to connect with state Flex coordinators when contacted directly by CAH.

Fiscal Year 2021 Quality Improvement Projects

RQITA is supporting state Flex programs with their fiscal year 2021 quality improvement projects through individualized technical assistance and convening of quality innovation labs (QILs) offering an opportunity for states working to learn from and with one another. For more information, contact Sarah Brinkman, sbrinkman@stratishealth.org.

Rural Quality Advisory Council

RQITA facilitates a quarterly [Rural Quality Advisory Council](#) on behalf of FORHP. The Council is comprised of leaders in rural health quality, representing diverse perspectives from across the country and its purpose is to:

- Provide feedback, guidance, and insight on the development, implementation, and evaluation of the RQITA technical assistance strategies for the MBQIP and SCHPQI programs.
- Offer advice and counsel on development of rural-relevant quality improvement goals and metrics, and their integration more broadly into new and existing FORHP funded programs.

Need more information?

Contact Sarah Brinkman, sbrinkman@stratishealth.org or 952-853-8552.

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