

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 (SCHPQI)
 - Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Program 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 awarded to Stratis Health

About Stratis Health

- Stratis Health is an independent nonprofit organization that leads collaboration and innovation in health care quality and patient safety. For more information about Stratis Health, visit the [Stratis Health website](#).
 - Long standing focus on rural health quality; history of working with rural providers, critical access hospitals (CAHs) and the Flex Program
 - Other federal roles have included serving as a Medicare Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) and Health Information Technology (HIT) Regional Extension Center (REC)
 - Learn more about the team by reviewing the [RQITA Team Biographies](#)
- Through RQITA, Stratis Health works to implement technical assistance to support quality reporting and improvement, collaborating with FORHP and other partners, including:
 - National Rural Health Resource Center, Technical Assistance and Services Center (TASC)
 - Flex Monitoring Team (FMT)
 - State Flex Programs
 - Georgia Health Policy Center (SCHPQI technical assistance provider)

MBQIP Tools and Resources

RQITA MBQIP tools and resources are posted on the [TASC MBQIP website](#). Some key tools and 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 status and history of the program as well as key resources available to support them in their work
- [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
- [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 site, which measures are reported to the site and how to submit those measures to the site
- **[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

Additional support

- **[MBQIP Virtual Knowledge Groups](#)**. A facilitated forum for state Flex Program personnel and subcontractors to share MBQIP successes, discuss challenges, and brainstorm strategies to assist hospitals toward reporting, improving, and excelling across the four quality domains.
- **MBQIP Consultations**. RQITA team members are available for one-on-one discussions with Flex staff and/or MBQIP subcontractors to help support state level implementation.
- **[MBQIP 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:
 - Respond and resolve
 - Forward to RQITA or FORHP as appropriate
 - TASC and RQITA have processes to connect with state Flex Coordinators when contacted directly by CAH

Rural Quality Advisory Council

RQITA facilitates a [Rural Quality Advisory Council](#) quarterly 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.

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$625,000 with 0% financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official view of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government. (October 2019)