



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 Project (Flex) Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Program (MBQIP)
- Intended to add expertise related to quality reporting and improvement, not to replace technical assistance support already in place
- Three-year Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) FORHP cooperative agreement awarded to Stratis Health in September 2015

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 <http://www.stratishealth.org/>
 - Longstanding 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 Regional Extension Center
 - Brief biographies of the RQITA team can be found at <https://www.ruralcenter.org/sites/default/files/Rural%20Quality%20Improvement%20Technical%20Assistance%20Team.pdf>.
- Through RQITA, Stratis Health is working closely with FORHP and partners to develop and implement technical assistance to support quality reporting and improvement, 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 Support

RQITA MBQIP tools and resources are posted on the TASC MBQIP website at <https://www.ruralcenter.org/tasc/mbqip>. Tools and resources include:

- MBQIP Data Reporting Reminders: Posted monthly for Flex staff to cut and paste into their state CAH communications as appropriate <https://www.ruralcenter.org/tasc/resources/mbqip-data-reporting-reminders>
- MBQIP Measure Fact Sheets: One-page summaries of all MBQIP required measures <https://www.ruralcenter.org/tasc/resources/mbqip-measures-fact-sheets>
- MBQIP Monthly: Monthly e-newsletter that provides CAHs with information and support for quality reporting and improvement <https://www.ruralcenter.org/tasc/mbqip/mbqip-monthly>

- Emergency Department Transfer Communication Resources: Data specifications, FAQ, an Excel-based data collection tool, and recorded trainings
http://www.stratishealth.org/providers/ED_Transfer_Resources.html
- CAH Quality Improvement Implementation Guide and Toolkit. Offers strategies and resources to help CAH staff organize and support efforts to implement best practices for quality improvement
<https://www.ruralcenter.org/tasc/resources/quality-improvement-implementation-guide-and-toolkit-critical-access-hospitals>
- *MBQIP Data Collection Checklist*. Step-by-step overview of MBQIP data reporting processes, including links to resources to support data collection and reporting (Anticipated March 2016)
- *HCAHPS Response Rates – Best Practices* (Anticipated late spring 2016)

Additional support:

- **MBQIP Virtual Knowledge Group**. A facilitated forum by RQITA and TASC 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. For more information contact Jodi Winters, jwinters@stratishealth.org, or 952-853-8513.

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, that is comprised of 18 leaders in rural health quality, representing diverse perspectives from across the country. The Council’s 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 Karla Weng, kweng@stratishealth.org or 952-853-8570.