

**Minutes from
Arizona Rural Quality Network Group Meeting
Wednesday, April 26, 2006**

Those participating:

Copper Queen Community Hospital
Copper Queen Community Hospital
Southeast Arizona Medical Center
Southeast Arizona Medical Center
Northern Cochise Community Hospital
Page Hospital
Benson Hospital
Ft. Yuma IHS Hospital
Health Services Advisory Group

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RHO

The conference call began at 11:00 a.m.

Agenda topics and discussion:

Review of FY2007-2008 Arizona Flex Program

Alison outlined the activities recently submitted in the Flex grant application. These included:

1. Designations: to be pursued in Cobre Valley and Springerville
2. Quality of care: continuing support for Balanced Scorecard; continuing the Arizona Rural Quality Network Group
3. Training: to include billing and coding; cost allocation for CFOs; an HIT network; CAH executives; grant writing; HIPPA for CAHs; Crucial Conversations; case management

Review of the proposed FY 2006 Small Hospital Improvement Program grant QA projects

1. Leila noted the enclosed handout and encouraged participants to consider pooling their SHIP funds in a project such as HIT next year.

Discuss the new interactive Web-based tool - *State Snapshot* - launched by AHRQ for states to measure quality performance

1. Jim L. mentioned this Web site.

Jim D. commented that the averaging of the whole state was of limited use to individual hospitals, especially smaller ones. There is a lag in reporting of up to 18 months.

Update on the Flex Program's Medication Reconciliation Pilot Project

1. Howard described this project, which includes these hospitals: Copper Queen (Bisbee), Page, Little Colorado (Winslow) and Southeast Arizona (Douglas). It will involve a written survey of procedures, site visits, and targeted areas of improvement to be measured. Also cooperating are HSAG, Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association, Arizona Pharmacy Alliance and Managed Care Pharmacy Consultants.

Progress on the 8th Scope of Work

1. Judith reported on the April 13 meeting of HoW, the Hospital Workgroup, which was via a one-hour teleconference. The three following items were presented:

--The Deficit Reduction Act requires CMS to increase the APU reduction from 0.4% to 2% for hospitals that fail to report the required measures of quality. The draft regulation requires 21 measures (8-AMI, 4-HF, 7-PNE, and 2-SIP). This is open for public comment from April 12 to June 12, 2006. The above information is mainly for PPS (Prospective Payment Systems) hospitals, not CAHs.

-- Institute of Medicine's (IOM) recent report indicated that quality improvement is occurring, but the pace of change is too slow. QIOs need to assist providers to develop their own capacity to measure and improve their performance, along with providing technical assistance.

--The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports the need for CMS to improve its method for data validation.

The next HoW Meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at HSAG

2. Judith also mentioned HCAHPS, the standardized instrument for measuring patients' perspectives on hospital care, which will be nationally implemented October 2006. The survey contains 27 items in English and Spanish. National implementation will be Oct. 2006. The dry run for hospital implementation is April-May-June. Additional information can be found at www.hcahpsonline.org. HSAG is the implementation contractor. Hospitals' questions can be emailed to hcahps@azqio.sdps.org or call 1-888-884-4007.

Jim D. commented that Stroudwater refuses to use it with Balanced Scorecard.

Glen stated that Stroudwater would use HCAHPS as an optional system.

Kim stated that NCCH is participating in the HCAHPS dry run from April-June 2006. Howard asked how it compared to the AHCCCS satisfaction survey.

Kim replied that it was aimed at patient experience not satisfaction. NCCH contracted with NRC + Picker (<http://nrcpicker.com/> 1-800-388-4264) to assist with this.

3. Judith continued that the data submission deadline for the 4th quarter of 2005 is May 15. Charlie Chapin sent an e-mail requesting the names of data abstractors. He will be setting up a listserv and quarterly teleconferences for updates and discussion on data collections.

Annie mentioned that the CART for data uploading was not very friendly. Upgrading from 3.0 to 3.0.1 caused problems but assistance was received from the Help Desk. Judith mentioned that HSAG is also a source for assistance. Contact Suzette Gerhart at sgerhart@azqio.sdps.org.

The conference call adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

The next meeting will be by conference call on July 26, 2006, at 11:00 a.m. The agenda, along with the phone number and conference call, will be e-mailed in early July.

Submitted by Jim Laukes, Rural Health Office, UA Zuckerman College of Public Health.