

Arizona Rural Quality Network Group (ARQNG)

BACKGROUND

In April 2003, four small rural hospitals in Southeastern Arizona—with less than 25 beds and limited resources—developed and initiated a collaboration called the Southeastern Arizona Hospital Workgroup. The founding members included:

- Northern Cochise Community Hospital (Willcox)
- Southeastern Arizona Medical Center (Douglas)
- Copper Queen Community Hospital (Bisbee)
- Benson Hospital (Benson)

Driven by their commitment to quality care and determination to overcome the challenges specific to small rural hospitals, this group evolved into a statewide quality group called the Arizona Rural Quality Network Group (ARQNG).

PURPOSE

ARQNG is a multidisciplinary collaboration of clinical and quality improvement team members working together from critical access hospitals (CAHs) and those eligible for Small Hospital Improvement Programs (SHIPs) to create and implement interventions directed toward improving the quality of care provided to patients in small volume rural hospitals throughout Arizona. The bimonthly teleconferences focus on networking, sharing, problem solving, and developing/modifying interventions.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote the partnership between the CAHs, SHIPs, Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG), Rural Health Office (RHO), and other Arizona health care stakeholders.
- Share information on clinical topics, care processes, and quality improvement projects.
- Communicate successes, barriers, and lessons learned within Arizona's acute care settings.
- Collaborate in the development and implementation of materials, tools, and interventions to improve the quality of care.
- Promote the reduction of medication/system failures.
- Identify means for improving the timeliness of a patient transfer from the emergency room to a higher-level hospital.
- Collaborate on enhancing the communication system between urban and rural hospitals concerning the return of patients to their respective rural hospital/community.

MILESTONES

- Three rural hospital quality managers have been certified as a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ).
- Statewide participation in the Medicare Congestive Heart Failure Demonstration Project, *HeartPartners*.

CONTACTS

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Additional information regarding the ARQNG is available at <http://acute.hsag.com/rural.asp>.