



The Rural Hospital Award Program (RHAP)

RHAP Overview

The Rural Hospital Award Program (RHAP) is an annual recognition program for rural hospitals sponsored by Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG). The RHAP recognizes performance on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) 7th Scope of Work (SoW) quality indicators for community-acquired pneumonia (PN). There are eight clinical data elements collected for PN. The award, known as the Carter L. Marshall, MD, MPH, Rural Hospital Quality Award, recognizes the rural hospitals with the highest performance in PN care. There is no limit to the number of rural hospitals that may win an award.

The RHAP promotes quality improvement efforts by encouraging cooperation and collaboration among rural hospitals. Performance feedback and recognition will motivate hospitals to continuously improve the quality of health care they provide. The RHAP will foster the sharing of successful quality improvement strategies.

An additional purpose of the RHAP is to stimulate quality improvement in rural hospitals by assisting them with one of their biggest problems—that of patients bypassing the local hospital in favor of care in Phoenix or Tucson. Bypasses, which have a significant financial impact on rural hospitals, occur because of the perception that rural hospitals do not have the staff, resources, or technology to provide quality health care for serious illnesses. The RHAP provides public recognition for rural hospitals that provide care that is as good or better than that provided by urban hospitals, helping to improve public perception of these rural hospitals in their marketplaces.

Eligibility for a RHAP Award

RHAP eligibility requires that a rural hospital must routinely submit data to the CMS clinical warehouse in conjunction with the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA). The majority of Arizona hospitals are participants in HQA.

RHAP hospitals must meet geographic criteria for classification as a rural hospital. For the purpose of this project, rural hospitals were defined as all hospitals that reside outside of Maricopa County or Pima County, with the exception of rural hospitals that reside within those two counties.