

# N e w s   R e l e a s e

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## **Impacting Health Care in New Mexico**

Albuquerque, NM – The New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA), the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) and the External Quality Review Organization (EQRO) for New Mexico, recently published a summary document of work accomplished under the first year of its current three-year QIO contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and achievements made under its various other contracts.

The document, *New Mexico Health Care Providers and NMMRA Working Together to Improve the Quality of Care*, highlights NMMRA's work with Medicare beneficiaries, hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, health plans, physician offices and various other health care providers and stakeholders. It can be accessed on the NMMRA Web site at [www.nmmra.org/resources/download.php?id=1875](http://www.nmmra.org/resources/download.php?id=1875).

“This report serves as a way to inform our various stakeholders of recent progress made in health care quality improvement areas that NMMRA is under contract to perform,” said Dan Jaco, NMMRA chief executive officer. “It also highlights many of our projects, partnerships and collaborations that are so critical to NMMRA’s continued success in fulfilling its mission of facilitating demonstrable and continuous improvement in the quality of health care.”

NMMRA’s QIO-related work highlighted in the document includes efforts in the areas of:

- Patient Safety:
  - Nine New Mexico hospitals participating on the Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) were able to achieve a relative improvement of 8 percent in processes for appropriate pre-surgical hair removal; 11 percent and 14 percent, respectively, on measures related to appropriate venous thromboembolism (VTE) prophylaxis ordered and given timely; and 8 percent in providing timely beta blockers for surgical patients who were receiving the medication prior to surgery (the report explains why these measures are important indicators of quality care)
  - Twenty-one New Mexico nursing homes participating with NMMRA in a project to reduce the use of physical restraints achieved a relative improvement of 21 percent

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## New Mexico Medical Review Association



- Prevention:
  - NMMRA assisted 16 physician practices in meeting a July 31 deadline for reporting baseline information; the practices are using their electronic health records (EHRs) in an effort to implement care management processes to improve rates of breast cancer and colorectal cancer screenings as well as influenza and pneumococcal immunizations
- Beneficiary Protection:
  - Between August 2008 and July 2009, NMMRA's beneficiary helpline processed 795 calls, and for the 11 months ending June 2009, NMMRA reviewed a total of 12 beneficiary complaint cases, confirming quality concerns in four of those cases
  - As of September 1, among hospitals participating in the Reporting Hospital Quality Data for Annual Payment Update program, 19 hospitals passed fourth quarter of 2008 validation at 90 percent or greater, and another 15 passed with equal to or greater than 80 percent

The report also covers achievements related to NMMRA's EQRO contract and work with the New Mexico Influenza Vaccine Consortium, New Mexico Department of Health (tobacco cessation and critical access hospital programs), New Mexico Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) Collaborative, New Mexico Prescription Improvement Coalition, the Health Resources and Services Administration Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Collaborative, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) initiative. It concludes with statements made by several individuals in response to attending NMMRA-sponsored events during the last year and source documentation supporting each project.

NMMRA is a not-for-profit, physician-sponsored organization that is New Mexico's federally contracted Medicare Quality Improvement Organization and External Quality Review Organization for Medicaid. The organization works with health care providers, consumers and health care organizations, and state and federal agencies to improve the quality of health care in New Mexico.

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This material was prepared by the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA), the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for New Mexico, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.  
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