

Walk a Mile in the Leadership's Shoes

Why Focus on Quality Improvement?



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KEYWORDS

- Quality improvement • Michigan Arthroplasty Registry Collaborative Quality Initiative
- Value-based care • Pay for performance
- Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA)

KEY POINTS

- Lack of quality health care results in avoidable medical errors, cost inefficiencies, and poorer clinical outcomes.
- Physician and hospital reimbursements are closely tied to meeting QI standards.
- As QI initiatives are implemented by leaders in health care, strict adherence to QI standards by all members of the health care team is essential to their success.

INTRODUCTION

In order to maximize quality improvement (QI) in medicine, the health care system must find ways to harness value-based care.¹ To accomplish this, quality measures such as improved outcomes, shorter length of stays (LOS), and reduced complications must coincide with lower expenses.

It has been estimated that between 98,000 and 210,000 people die annually as a result of preventable harm in hospitals, making medical errors the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.^{2,3} Preventable death is an extreme result of poor quality and medical errors. However, other examples such as wrong site surgeries, postoperative infections, and

lack of operating room (OR) efficiency all contribute to lower quality and increased expenses that burden the health care system.

In addition to the devastating complications that can result from preventable mistakes, medical errors are estimated to cost the United States health care system \$29 billion annually.⁴ To combat this, recent changes in health care reimbursement are emphasizing the importance of QI. The Medicare Access and CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) Reauthorization Act reimburses physicians.⁵ Merit-based incentive payment systems and advanced alternative payment models will encourage physicians and health care systems to meet certain quality benchmarks in order to receive full reimbursement. Medicare is also transitioning the

Funding Sources: No additional funding sources were used for this article.

Conflicts of Interest: No conflicts of interest are evident for authors of this article.

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Orthop Clin N Am 49 (2018) 411–417

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocl.2018.05.004>

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