

ANNOUNCEMENT

Retirement of the Area-Level Inpatient Quality Indicators (IQIs) in Future Versions of the AHRQ QI Software

The AHRQ Inpatient Quality Indicators (IQIs) contain two types of indicators, including those measured at the area (or geographic) level and those measured at the provider (or hospital) level. This announcement pertains only to those indicators measured at the area-level.

Area-level IQIs Scheduled for Retirement

- **IQI 26 Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) Rate**
- **IQI 27 Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) Rate**
- **IQI 28 Hysterectomy Rate**
- **IQI 29 Laminectomy or Spinal Fusion Rate**

This announcement is to inform users of AHRQ Quality Indicators (QIs) that all future versions of the QI software, including v7.0 ICD-10-CM/PCS, will not include any area-level IQIs. Specifically, IQIs 26-29 will be retired. Version 6.0 ICD-9-CM and v6.0 ICD-10-CM/PCS of the QI software will be the last release that includes area-level IQIs.

The decision to retire the area-level IQIs was informed primarily by low use of the indicators as evidenced by user feedback, evidence scans, and the very low number of questions received by AHRQ regarding the area-level IQIs. Although these indicators are sometimes used at the State or County level for identifying areas of potential overuse, knowledge gaps on how to use them and how to respond to high or low rates may limit their value to QI stakeholders.

Additionally, the usefulness of the area-level indicators has declined in recent years due to the shift of procedures to outpatient settings. In 2012, the percentages of PCI, hysterectomy, laminectomy, and spinal fusion occurring in the outpatient setting (versus inpatient) were at least 13%, 43%, 28%, and 11%, respectively.¹ CABG and hysterectomy rates have also become less useful because the use of these procedures has declined substantially over time nationwide (i.e., 6.3% and 7.6% each year, respectively, between 2003 and 2012²), suggesting that overuse may be less of a concern now than it was when the area-level IQIs were initially developed.

In September 2016, the AHRQ Quality Indicator Standing Workgroup reviewed and discussed the low uptake and the need for significant analytical work for the area-level IQIs as outlined above. The workgroup recommended that the area-level IQIs should be retired in order to focus on new and high-impact areas of healthcare quality. Therefore, AHRQ is retiring the following measures based on

¹ Some states do not participate in the State Ambulatory and Services Database (SASD). Therefore outpatient procedures in these states are not counted, whereas inpatient procedures are, leading to an underestimation of the percentage of outpatient to inpatient procedures.

² Fingar KR, Stocks C, Weiss AJ, Steiner CA. Most Frequent Operating Room Procedures Performed in U.S. Hospitals, 2003–2012. HCUP Statistical Brief #186. December 2014. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb186-Operating-Room-Procedures-United-States-2012.pdf>

Workgroup recommendations, evidence of low visibility and use, and the shifting of these procedures to outpatient settings.

AHRQ will continue to maintain and refine provider (or hospital) level IQIs including:

- IQI 01 Esophageal Resection Volume
- IQI 02 Pancreatic Resection Volume
- IQI 04 Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Repair Volume
- IQI 05 Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) Volume
- IQI 06 Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) Volume
- IQI 07 Carotid Endarterectomy Volume
- IQI 08 Esophageal Resection Mortality Rate
- IQI 09 Pancreatic Resection Mortality Rate
- IQI 11 Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Repair Mortality Rate
- IQI 12 Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) Mortality Rate
- IQI 13 Craniotomy Mortality Rate
- IQI 14 Hip Replacement Mortality Rate
- IQI 15 Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI) Mortality Rate
- IQI 16 Heart Failure Mortality Rate
- IQI 17 Acute Stroke Mortality Rate
- IQI 18 Gastrointestinal Hemorrhage Mortality Rate
- IQI 19 Hip Fracture Mortality Rate
- IQI 20 Pneumonia Mortality Rate
- IQI 21 Cesarean Delivery Rate, Uncomplicated
- IQI 22 Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC) Delivery Rate, Uncomplicated
- IQI 30 Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) Mortality Rate
- IQI 31 Carotid Endarterectomy Mortality Rate
- IQI 32 Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI) Mortality Rate, Without Transfer Cases
- IQI 33 Primary Cesarean Delivery Rate, Uncomplicated
- IQI 34 Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC) Rate, All
- IQI 90 Mortality for Selected Procedures
- IQI 91 Mortality for Selected Conditions