



PQA Announces Official Launch of Demonstration Projects

July 9, 2008, Alexandria, VA

PQA, Inc., a pharmacy quality alliance, announced the funding and launch of five demonstration projects to test the feasibility of creating systems to monitor the quality of pharmacy performance. PQA, Inc. is partnering with over 20 organizations, including health plans and pharmacies in testing new models for data aggregation, report generation, and quality improvement related to pharmacy services and use of medications. The awardees are:

- *Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin and University of Wisconsin-Madison, representing the Wisconsin Pharmacy Quality Collaborative (WPQC), including the following payers, State of Wisconsin Dept of Health and Family Services, United Healthcare of Wisconsin, Unity Health Insurance and Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin*
- *Highmark in collaboration with CECity.com and the Rite Aid Corporation*
- *Outcomes Pharmaceutical Health Care in collaboration with Kerr Drug, Inc and the University of North Carolina Eshelman School of Pharmacy*
- *Purdue University School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in collaboration with The Regenstrief Institute (an informatics and healthcare research organization), the Indiana Health Information Exchange, Inc (IHIE), and the Indiana Pharmacists Alliance (IPA)*
- *University of Iowa and the Iowa Foundation for Medical Care in collaboration with Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise*

In announcing these grants, PQA's Executive Director, Laura Cranston, RPh, emphasized, "As we focus on providing high quality, effective pharmacy services, it is critical to evaluate the care delivered by a particular pharmacy. We have to understand and develop the best ways for doing this. Learning more by using the PQA-endorsed pharmacy measures and PQA-developed reports in real-world settings will provide critical information to get us there. We are pleased with the diversity of plans, health information exchanges, quality improvement organizations, community pharmacies and academic institutions that have come together to be the early adopters to test in their pharmacies the 15 PQA measures as well as the questionnaire of consumer experiences."

"Producing pharmacy performance reports is the first step along a continuum of achieving value-based health care", states PQA Chairman, Bruce Roberts, who serves as President and CEO of the National Community Pharmacists Association. Pharmacies and providers will gain experience in producing and, more importantly, utilizing these reports to continue to enhance the high quality care being provided. Once we determine best practices, we will begin to shift our focus toward creating a consumer-centric report that can provide transparent, user-friendly data on the performance of pharmacies in delivering patient-focused pharmacy services."

PQA, Inc. has allocated over \$ 800,000 of its funds to support these demonstration projects. Cost-sharing by the participating demonstration projects was required of all project applicants. The demonstration projects will conclude in summer 2009.

PQA, Inc. is a membership based alliance that represents a broad group of stakeholders including pharmacist practitioner groups, health plans, pharmacy benefit management companies, government agencies (including CMS), employers, long term care pharmacy groups, pharmaceutical manufacturers, consumer groups, patient advocacy organizations, and quality improvement organizations. The mission of PQA is “to improve health care quality and patient safety through a collaborative process in which the key stakeholders agree on a strategy for measuring performance at the pharmacy and pharmacist-levels; collecting data in the least burdensome way; and reporting meaningful information to consumers, pharmacists, employers, payers, and other healthcare decision-makers to help make informed choices, improve outcomes and stimulate the development of new payment models.”

For more information about PQA and our demonstration project partners, visit www.PQAalliance.org or contact Laura Cranston, RPh, Executive Director, PQA, 703-690-1987 for additional information.