

Meteor Program

July 2011– January 2012

Overview

The Meteor Program took on the challenge of assisting physician groups to improve performance in Medicare Star measures for 2011 working within only the final six months of the year.

Medicare Star measures all make clinical sense, and because Medicare Health Plans compensate physician groups on percent of plan revenue, a pay-for-performance mechanism is built into the business model. Additionally, because measurement is at the plan level, every group's performance impacts the final score; the ideal improvement strategy is a collaborative effort.

Structure

The program targeted physician groups with existing registries that wanted to strengthen approaches to patient outreach and move quickly to close care gaps within six months. Two in-person meetings were combined with coaching calls with CQC staff between meetings.



The curriculum focused on the role of centralized group functions in:

- Coordinating bidirectional data exchange with plans to generate gap or exception reports
- Addressing the specific challenges around improving scores on the priority Star measures, as defined by CQC sponsor health plans
- Physician outreach and engagement
- Member outreach to close gaps through phone calls or reminder letters
- Group-sponsored senior wellness clinics

Measurement

Health plans defined four priority metrics based on clinical importance, small denominators and opportunity for performance improvement in a short timeframe. Priority measures included the following, however physician groups selected measures based on organizational strategic goals:

- Breast Cancer Screening
- Osteoporosis Management for Women with a Fracture
- Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Spirometry for COPD

Participants

Twelve physician groups enrolled, several of which are umbrella systems, collectively caring for about 125,000 Medicare enrollees served by over 2,600 network primary care physicians:

- Alta Bates Medical Group (ABMG)
- Brown and Toland Physicians (BTMG)
- Bristol Park Medical Group/Memorial Care Medical Foundation
- Choice Medical Group
- Coast Healthcare Management
- Good Samaritan Medical Practice Association
- High Desert Primary Care Medical Group
- Independence Medical Group
- NAMM/Prime Care Riverside
- Riverside Physician Network
- Sutter Medical Network
- Synermed/Multicultural Primary Care Medical Group

Interventions

Participating groups adopted a variety of interventions to improve scores over the last six months of 2011. The following are examples of the most common or most effective strategies adopted.

- Centralized outreach letters and phone calls to patients with PCP support
 - Personalized language to make the case to patients
 - Bilingual nursing staff
- Standing lab orders and mailed lab slips to patients
- Send gap reports to PCP practices monthly
- Educate physicians and office staff about Medicare Star and business case
 - Measure-specific provider Continuing Medical Education, such as for disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) to treat rheumatoid arthritis
- Develop sole-source contract with imaging provider for mammograms
- Contract for and provide transportation for patients to imaging appointments
- Provide incentives to office staff
- Conduct wellness clinics with in-house bone density dexa scan, lab draw, and mammograms
- Improve Risk Adjustment Factor (RAF) scoring, hierarchical condition categories (HCC) coding, and annual health assessments (AHA) by
 - Adopting a standard AHA form,
 - Setting and communicating standards for PCP practices,
 - Delivering pre-populated forms to PCPs for completion, and
 - Implementing pay cuts for not meeting standards after incentives failed.

Results

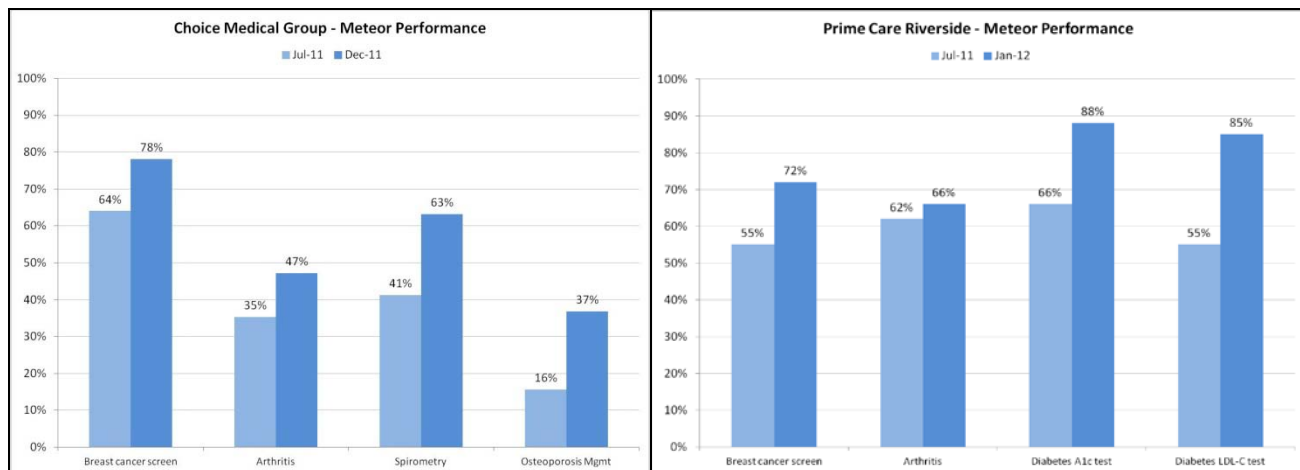
Data was not aggregated across the participating groups, but the following are reports from individual groups.

- Coast Healthcare Management increased osteoporosis management at each of its three IPAs (Alamitos, Lakewood, St. Mary's) and improved from a one-Star rating to a three-Star rating.
- ABMG reached a five-Star rating for Breast and Colorectal Cancer screenings.
- Both ABMG and BTMG are on the brink of five-Star ratings for Monitoring Persistent Medications and Diabetes measures.
- High Desert Primary Care improved Star ratings over the course of six months by implementing birthday card reminders and comprehensive visits at a dedicated wellness center.

High Desert Primary Care Measure	Star Rating	
	July 2011	December 2011
Blood pressure control	1.7	3.4
Glaucoma screening	1.3	4.6
Diabetes eye exams	1	4.8

- Choice Medical Group improved multiple Star measures through outreach and education of PCPs and a senior health and wellness center.
- Prime Care Riverside conducted patient outreach through letters and phone calls, delivered gap reports to PCPs, and conducted PCP and office staff education to improve multiple measures.

Results Cont.



Lessons Learned

With the Meteor Program, CQC demonstrated that individual groups can improve quality performance within just six months with a focused, centralized effort by the group staff. Achieving five-Star level of performance will require Medicare Star measures to be included in all groups' registries and data in registries should be reconciled with plan data.

Both physicians and members are challenged to fully understand new Star requirements and the implications of poor performance. Emphasis on communication with both stakeholders will need to be fostered and maintained. Homebound and frail members present additional challenges that can be overcome by interventions such as arranging and providing transportation, engaging community resources, and providing in-home care.

Overall, there are more commonalities than differences in achieving high scores for commercial P4P and Medicare Star. Future CQC programs will build on the Meteor experience to emphasize common approaches and to integrate key transformational interventions at the point-of-care.

Quotes

"This is all new and we're a small group. The Meteor Program gives us context, it gives us resources. We literally take some of the materials word-for-word that Meteor has given us and we teach that to our providers, so it's really an extension of us. It's what we would like to be if we had the resources ourselves...If you're not in Meteor, you're waiting around...you're going to be left behind." - Blair Bryson, IPA Administrator, Choice Medical Group

"Being plugged in to the health plans and to the status of Star measures and updates was big for our organization. We're so busy with so many priorities, Meteor has been a great way for us to focus on MA Stars...and doing it in an environment where we can network with others in the industry so we knew we were on the right track." - Nancy McGinnis and Shane Alvarado, Sutter Medical Network



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