

## **National Quality Strategy will promote better health, quality care for Americans**

*Created under the Affordable Care Act, first-ever Strategy will guide local, State and national efforts to improve quality of care*

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today released the National Strategy for Quality Improvement in Health Care (National Quality Strategy). The Strategy was called for under the Affordable Care Act and is the first effort to create national aims and priorities to guide local, State, and national efforts to improve the quality of health care in the United States.

“The Affordable Care Act sets America on a path toward a higher quality health care system so we stop doing things that don’t work for patients and start doing more of the things that do work,” said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. “American hospitals, doctors, nurses and other health care providers are among the best in the world. With this ground-breaking strategy, we are working with local communities and health care providers to help patients and improve the health of all Americans.”

The National Quality Strategy will promote quality health care that is focused on the needs of patients, families, and communities. At the same time, the Strategy is designed to move the system to work better for doctors and other health care providers – reducing their administrative burdens and helping them collaborate to improve care. The Strategy presents three aims for the health care system:

- **Better Care:** Improve the overall quality, by making health care more patient-centered, reliable, accessible, and safe.
- **Healthy People & Communities:** Improve the health of the U.S. population by supporting proven interventions to address behavioral, social, and environmental determinants of health in addition to delivering higher-quality care.

**Affordable Care:** Reduce the cost of quality health care for individuals, families, employers, and government.

To help achieve these aims, the Strategy also establishes six priorities, to help focus efforts by public and private partners. Those priorities are:

- Making care safer by reducing harm caused in the delivery of care.
- Ensuring that care engages each person and family as partners.
- Ensuring that each person and family are engaged as partners in their care.
- Promoting the most effective prevention and treatment practices for the leading causes of mortality, starting with cardiovascular disease.
- Working with communities to promote wide use of best practices to enable healthy living.
- Making quality care more affordable for individuals, families, employers, and governments by developing and spreading new health care delivery models.

The Strategy was developed both through evidence-based results of the latest research and a collaborative transparent process that included input from a wide range of stakeholders across the health care system, including Federal and State agencies, local communities, provider organizations,

clinicians, patients, businesses, employers, and payers. This process of engagement will continue in 2011 and beyond.

The National Quality Strategy is designed to be an evolving guide for the Nation as we continue to move forward with efforts to measure and improve health and health care quality. HHS will continue to work with stakeholders to create specific quantitative goals and measures for each of these priorities. In addition, as different communities have different needs and assets, the Strategy and HHS will empower them to take different paths to achieving these goals.

The National Quality Strategy is just one piece of a broader effort by the Obama Administration to improve the quality of health care, and will serve as a tool to better coordinate quality initiatives between public and private partners. For example, the Affordable Care Act established a new Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation that will test innovative care and service delivery models. These new models are being tested to determine if they will improve the quality of care and reduce program expenditures for Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Read the report at [www.HealthCare.gov/center/reports](http://www.HealthCare.gov/center/reports). For more information about the National Quality Strategy, visit [www.ahrq.gov/workingforquality/](http://www.ahrq.gov/workingforquality/).

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