

Medicare's role in motivating and supporting quality improvement

ISSUE: There is wide variation in the quality of health care in the United States, and the pace of quality improvement has been slow. In addition to payment policy, Medicare has other important ways to support providers' quality improvement. It may be that by leveraging multiple policies at once, we have the best chance of succeeding in improving quality of care.

The two policy levers we discussed in MedPAC's June 2010 Report to Congress were Medicare's funding of technical assistance (as provided through quality improvement organizations) and conditions of participation.

KEY POINTS: At the November meeting two national figures in quality of care issues will discuss their views on how Medicare can improve its technical assistance and conditions of participation to further motivate and support quality improvement. The panelists are Robert Wachter, MD, Professor and Associate Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and Christopher Queram, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality.

ACTION: Commissioners should explore the nature of the challenge in improving quality as well as possible changes in Medicare policy that could help overcome those challenges.

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