

Value and Quality for Ambulatory Pharmacist Patient Care Practice

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INTRODUCTION

We are amid a remarkable era in health-care witnessing a dramatic and rapid shift toward value and quality. Health-care teams are charged to provide quality patient-centered and engaged care and to achieve quality-related goals which then determine the financial team's compensation. Therefore, critical to sustainable practice now and in the future is the ability to deliver quality services of a desired and measurable value. The emphasis in healthcare of the Triple Aim of improving quality at decreased cost will require fundamental day-to-day changes in how ambulatory pharmacists deliver their care and demonstrate their impact and how teams and organizations adapt to value-based payments.¹ As reimbursement payment strategies hold organizations accountable for value and quality, they in turn are closely examining the contribution of each healthcare team and its individual members toward meeting these requirements.

Chapter Objectives

- Describe the rationale for developing a robust ambulatory patient care services quality improvement program.
- Apply key quality principles to the structure of your clinic or service to provide quality services.
- Describe the different types of quality measures and processes and their important characteristics.
- Identify the creators and influencers of quality measurement and how to use their resources to best build your quality program.
- Identify best practices and barriers to building a quality program for your service.

As discussed in Chapter 1, medications as a leading therapeutic choice in healthcare notably improve the care of many patients, yet simultaneously

contribute to significant healthcare problems and cost. Medication management services therefore should play a major role in determining quality and value for healthcare, regardless of the setting and model of providing patient care. Consequently, pharmacists as team care members have a vital role and responsibility to provide quality medication management services for patients. Understanding how to measure and be measured to determine your value within your healthcare team and organization is imperative.

CURRENT QUALITY LANDSCAPE FOR U.S. HEALTHCARE

In Chapter 1 we described the U.S. healthcare industry's efforts in energy, time, and money spent to improve the quality of the country's health system and the disappointing progress toward improvement. Compared with other industries concerned with public safety and quality, healthcare lags far behind.² We in the United States enjoy the benefits of many high reliability organizations such as the airline industry that maintain remarkable safety performance despite the risk and complexity of their industry. Contrast that with healthcare data such as the 2019 Medicare Star quality measures where performance gaps in clinical care measures ranged from 5% to nearly 50% between the highest and lowest performers.³ Ambulatory pharmacists as well as other providers continue to face the reality that the quality of patient care remains subpar in many instances, is too often unsafe, has notable disparities, continues to provide services with questionable value, has situations of overtreatment and undertreatment, and has a frustratingly slow pace in implementing improvement initiatives.

Reasons for minimal quality improvement in the U.S. health system are poorly understood and insufficiently studied. Creating successful change and measuring change in a very complicated, multifaceted system is difficult. Failures in improvement require new ideas and approaches and continued efforts. Responsibility falls on all members of the system—from the patient to the chief healthcare officers.

To improve quality and reduce healthcare costs, everyone in healthcare must assume the role of a quality steward and possess a strong working knowledge of what constitutes quality and how to measure it. Quality improvement efforts cannot occur solely from payer mandates or top-level organizational initiatives. Each member of the healthcare enterprise needs to actively participate in solving the challenges of providing quality care. Also, patients must be willing partners in the process by effectively articulating their desired outcomes or personal measures of quality. Those who work at the patient care level must be empowered to use their front-line knowledge and perspective to rapidly improve the structure and processes that lead to the desired outcomes of their care system. Managers, payers, and organizational leaders must work to coordinate these efforts and use what is learned at the patient care level to assess outcomes of the populations they serve. The process of management and reporting should be orchestrated such that the pace and level of quality improvement is meaningful and achievable. Each ambulatory pharmacist, as an important member of the team, must understand, embrace, and advocate quality principles with their clinical efforts to provide the best care and meet healthcare goals. The discussion in this chapter on the landscape