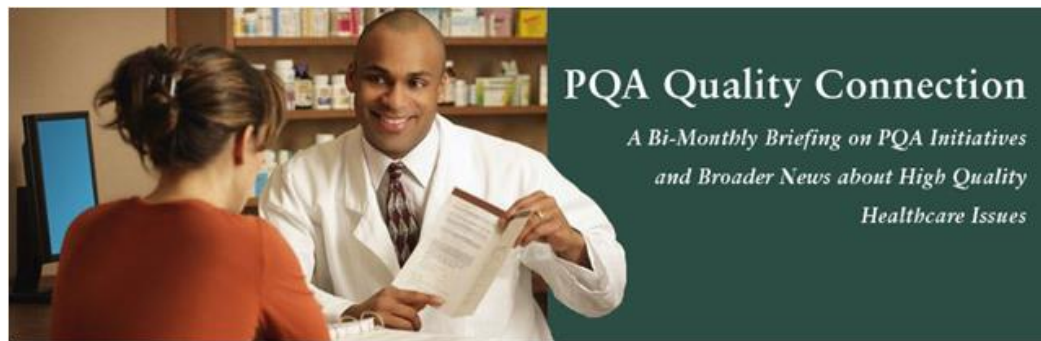




Hot off the Press: Connections to Key Quality Publications

Hot off the Press seeks to connect the reader to the most relevant and recent trials, reviews and commentaries related to health care quality within a focus on medication- and pharmacy-related topics.

The High Cost of Public Reporting

Joe Carrigan's healthcare experience narrative illuminates the unintended consequences of publicly-reported quality measures. Anish Koka shares the story of a 54-year-old patient, who after being admitted to the hospital for an infection of his artificial heart valve, was denied a replacement and died due to complications. Joe had several comorbidities including diabetes, renal failure, and cirrhosis from hepatitis C making him a high-risk patient. Given Joe's relatively young age and good functional status, he and his doctor agreed surgery would be beneficial. Unfortunately, they were unable to find a surgeon willing to operate.

The problem began at the admitting institution, where an initial surgery was scheduled but later cancelled. After further discussion with the surgical team, Joe's doctor uncovered the underlying reason for the surgical team's reluctance to operate – fear of a poor outcome and that failure could negatively impact the hospital and surgeon reputations, since this data is publicly reported. Not to be deterred, Joe's doctor attempted to find an outside institution that would take the case. One institution echoed the same concerns about how the case might affect their metric performance and ultimately

refused to perform the surgery. Another was reluctant to take the case because they were paid through a capitated payment model, and they would be unable to bill for their services.

Joe's story illuminates a concern that while performance measurement and public reporting can improve quality, unintended consequences can affect the way healthcare is delivered. Ideally, measures are used to incentivize compliance with best practice guidelines, but stories like Joe's require us to consider that sometimes the way we incentivize performance also changes the healthcare landscape in ways that can have undesired effects. As measure developers continue to work on developing publicly-reported measures, it is important to be aware of how the measure is being used within the healthcare system, the unintended effects of measurement, and strategies that can be used to prevent and mitigate those effects.

Koka, Anish. "The High Cost of Public Reporting." The Health Care Blog, 18 Sept. 2018, thehealthcareblog.com/blog/2017/09/18/the-cost-of-public-reporting/