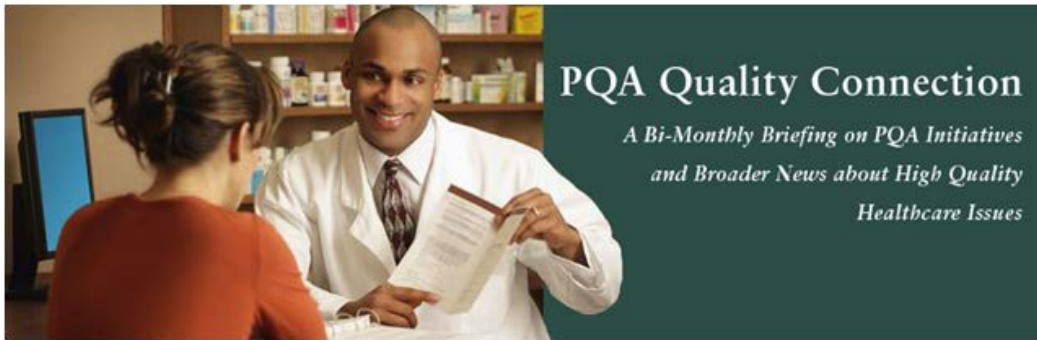




Hot Off the Press: Connections to Key Quality Publications

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

Topic: Mail Order Quality

- **Citation:** Schmittziel JA, Karter AJ, Dyer WT, et al. Safety and effectiveness of mail order pharmacy use in diabetes. *Am J Manag Care*. 2013;19(11):882-7.
- **Description:** Addressing the lack of current available data concerning health outcomes related to mail order pharmacy, researchers at Kaiser Permanente examined the safety and utilization outcomes of mail order pharmacy. Key outcomes examined included all-cause and preventable hospitalizations and emergency department visits, overlapping days supply of contraindicated medications, and laboratory monitoring of persistent medications. Results demonstrated that mail order pharmacy was associated with lower emergency department use and not associated with adverse outcomes in most diabetes patients.

Topic: Quality of Care -- Low-Value Services

- **Citation:** Morden NE, Colla CH, Sequist TD, et al. Choosing wisely -- the politics and economics of labeling low-value services. *N Eng J Med*. 2014 Jan 22. Available from: <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1314965>
- **Description:** The "Choosing Wisely" campaign focuses on improving patient health through better treatment choices, reduced risks and, where possible, reduced costs. Physician organizations developed lists of potentially low-value services to discuss with their patients while continuing to emphasize the importance of individual patient needs, physician judgment, patient choice, and the therapeutic dyad. The study authors suggest that some of these items should be incorporated into quality measurement efforts or financial incentives.

Topic: Impact of Social Determinants of Health on Medicare Stars

- **Citation:** Young GJ, Rickles NM, Chou CH, et al. Socioeconomic characteristics of enrollees appear to influence performance scores for Medicare Part D contractors. Health Aff. 2014 Jan; 33(1):140-6.
- **Description:** The authors of this study focused on the impact that socioeconomic factors can have on Part D plans' Stars ratings. Minority status, income subsidies, and not having a high school diploma were negatively associated with Part D adherence rates. This results in some Part D contractors possessing advantages over other contractors based on the socioeconomic demographics of their enrolled population. The study authors encouraged CMS to seriously consider adjusting adherence scores based on the socioeconomic characteristics of enrollees.