



The American Health  
Quality Association

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### **Statement on the Medicare Conference Agreement**

The American Health Quality Association (AHQA) represents Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) and related health care organizations and professionals working to improve the safety and quality of health care nationwide. We support congressional efforts to reform and modernize the Medicare program with the goal of providing high quality care to beneficiaries. Offering seniors an outpatient prescription drug benefit holds great potential to improve the quality of care they receive and the quality of life they can maintain. AHQA has asked Congress to take certain proactive steps to ensure that this new benefit can achieve that tremendous potential.

AHQA is very pleased that the Medicare conference agreement includes Section 109 to expand the work of the Medicare QIOs to the new private plan options created by the legislation. Under the provision, the QIOs will engage the new plans and their providers, on a voluntary basis, to improve the quality of care they provide to Medicare beneficiaries.

In particular, the provision will require the QIOs to offer quality improvement assistance related to medication therapy provided by the new drug benefit. They will work with plans and providers to make sure that best practices are followed with regard to medication therapy, and that essential systems are in place to prevent errors and adverse events associated with the use of prescription drugs. We urge Congress to ensure that necessary prescription drug data is obtained by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and made available to the QIOs for these important quality improvement activities.

“The members of AHQA understand the difficult choices and appreciate the hard work necessary for Congress to reform and modernize Medicare,” said David G. Schulke, Executive Vice President of AHQA. “America’s seniors deserve the highest quality care possible. In this legislation, Congress has taken several important steps to ensure that QIOs can continue working diligently to measure and improve the quality of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries under both the traditional Medicare program and the new Medicare Advantage plans.”