



# spotlight on health care

## The Right Care For Every Person, Every Time <sup>TM</sup>

(NAPSA)—As more and more American consumers are taking a vested interest in the quality of the health care they receive, Medicare is helping them get the information they need.

Because it understands the importance of both consumer involvement and quality improvement, Medicare offers free access to “Compare” tools on its Web site, [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), and arranges for health care quality experts, known as Quality Improvement Organizations, or QIOs, to help health care providers.

### Consumer Involvement

The “Compare” tools are a good first step in the decision-making process when you or a loved one needs care. They provide quality of care information about hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and kidney dialysis facilities, as well as information to help you find the right prescription drug plan if you use Medicare. You can rest assured the information you see is based on the best science available to the U.S. government, and it is routinely enhanced and updated to reflect the latest quality data. After reviewing the quality measures and information on the Web site, you should have a conversation with the provider that interests you and talk with

your physician.

### Quality Improvement

Health care providers do their best to keep up with the latest techniques and best practices.

With increasing workloads, however, many providers may struggle just to keep up with demands in providing treatment and routine care.

Fortunately, Medicare can help there, too. The health care quality experts at QIOs in every state and territory in the country help make sure providers have the information resources to provide the right care to every person every time.

For the next three years, QIOs will be working with health care professionals to help them improve their performance on the quality measures featured on Medicare’s Web site. The QIOs’ services range from providing personalized, on-site clinical quality improvement assistance to activities as simple as distributing information on the latest care practices.

Through the combination of health care providers’ commitment to quality and the assistance of the QIOs, you can expect hospital treatments will be safer, with fewer errors, resulting in fewer infections after surgery. In physician offices, QIOs help doctors give

better care than ever to patients by using technology to help track their treatment histories.

In nursing homes, residents will have less of a chance of being subjected to physical restraints or the pain and discomfort of bedsores.

Meanwhile, patients receiving home health care after a hospital stay will be assured that agencies are working with QIOs on ways to reduce the likelihood that they’ll need to return to the hospital.

As part of their work, QIOs help providers report the information consumers use on the “Compare” sites at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

The information is updated regularly so viewers can feel confident that the questions they might ask of a provider will be based on the latest reliable data.

For those without Internet access, 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227) is available for assistance. Medicare and its QIOs are committed to improving the quality of American health care. With the help of consumers, and by working together, the vision of the right care for every person every time can get closer to reality.

This information has been provided by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.