

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

200 Independence
Avenue, SW Washington,
D.C. 20201

April 13, 2000

Dear Colleague:

We are pleased to inform you about two quality improvement activities the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) are undertaking. They are briefly described below.

First, we have contracted with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) to offer States two collaborative projects; one on asthma and one on depression. These collaborative projects are designed to assist State Medicaid agencies in developing or improving their capacity to implement quality improvement activities or to provide technical assistance to contracting managed care organizations. Please see the enclosed fact sheet that describes the IHI collaborative project structure and timeline.

The second activity is an information sharing conference that we will be co-sponsoring on quality assessment and improvement tools that States can use to measure and improve the health care provided to their Medicaid beneficiaries. The conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 26-28, 2000. A save-the-date postcard has been sent to State staff designated as potential attendees by HCFA Regional Office staff and by SAMHSA. A copy is enclosed for your reference.

We are very excited about convening this information sharing conference and are happy to announce that both agencies have funds available to support State participants, one person from the State Medicaid agency and one person from the State Mental Health/Substance Abuse agency. If the State has separate agencies for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, we will fund one person from each agency. We encourage additional State staff to participate as well. We anticipate that management as well as quality improvement staff will participate in this conference. We will be sharing information in areas such as calculating performance measures, administering consumer and provider surveys, and using encounter data for quality measurement purposes. We hope to provide States with a vehicle to share their experiences for improving quality of care for Medicaid beneficiaries. In addition, we plan to address the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 requirements for quality oversight of Medicaid managed care, and to

explore tools that can be used to assess the quality of care provided to populations with special health care needs including beneficiaries with behavioral health care needs.

Among the highlights of this conference, States will have the opportunity to participate in a workshop with IHI, on the third day, on either the asthma or depression collaborative. States must commit in advance to participate in one or both collaboratives mentioned above.

We have scheduled a conference call May 17, 2000 from 3:00 to 4:00 EDT for States to explore this opportunity with IHI. If you are interested in this project, we need the name and contact information of the State official who will represent your agency. We suggest that the Medicaid Director, Substance Abuse Director, and Mental Health Director or other senior official participate on the call.

Please fill out the enclosed IHI collaborative project participation form and return by May 1 to:

Sharon Gilles
HCFA/CMSO/QPMG/DQSM
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S3- 13- 15
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Again, we are very excited to be able to offer you the opportunity to work with IHI and attend our conference. We look forward to your participation. If you have any questions, please contact Sharon Gilles on 410-786-1177 or Deirdre Duzor on 410-786-4626.

Sincerely,

/s/

Timothy M. Westmoreland Director Center for Medicaid and State Operations Health Care
Financing Administration

Joseph A. Autry, MD. Deputy, Administrator Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration

Enclosures

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HCFA & SAMHSA are Undertaking

cc:
All HCFA Regional Administrators

All HCFA Associate Regional Administrators for Medicaid and State Operations

Lee Partridge Director, Health Policy Unit American Public Human Services Association

Joy Wilson Director, Health Committee National Conference of State Legislatures

Matt Salo Director of Health Legislation National Governors' Association

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Bob Glover Executive Director, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

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