

CareFirst Quality Rewards - Surgeons

2009 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is CareFirst Quality Rewards – Surgeons (CQR-S)?

A: Early in 2008, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) and CareFirst BlueChoice, Inc. (CareFirst BlueChoice) introduced a new pay-for-quality program, CareFirst Quality Rewards (CQR). CQR was designed for PCP specialties and internal medicine subspecialists. Now CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice is announcing a comparable program for general surgeons, CareFirst Quality Rewards – Surgeons (CQR-S). Both programs are voluntary and recognize and provide financial rewards to physicians for delivering effective and affordable health care and service.

Q. Why did CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice develop CQR-S?

A. Our customers expect us to measure and reward quality, affordability and service-oriented practice measures. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice want practitioners to adopt quality improvement processes to: measure their own processes against national guidelines; take remedial steps when care falls short of guidelines and improve the care and outcomes for all of their patients. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice also want to give surgeons the opportunity to document their own quality.

Q: When does CQR-S begin?

A: CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice are announcing the program now so that general surgeons can take active steps to achieve and earn higher reimbursement levels. You must actively report your achievements by December 31, 2009. Increased reimbursement levels will be effective in late 2010.

Q: Are there incentives for participating in CQR-S?

A: Yes, based on total scores of Effectiveness and Affordability, general surgeons may earn 101, 104 or 107% of the standard fee schedule. See the enclosed achievement fee schedule at the bottom of the CQR-S Measure Menu.

Q. Which providers are eligible to participate in CQR-S?

A. All general surgeons in CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice's Regional Networks are invited. We are working with national surgical specialty organizations to develop measures appropriate for other types of surgeons, and to include in them in CQR-S in the future.

Q: Is there any risk to participating in CQR-S?

A: No. If you choose not to participate, you will continue to receive the CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice standard fee schedules applicable to the regional networks.

Q: Is this program for group or individual practices?

A: We expect surgeons in group and individual practices to be able to achieve success in CQR-S.

Q: You have measures of effectiveness. How do you define effectiveness?

A: Effectiveness includes quality care, access, and service-oriented business practices.

Q: You have a dimension of affordability. What is that?

A: Affordability is the efficient use of clinical resources, using the NCQA approved methodologies. You may see more about affordability at the CQR website <http://www.carefirst.com/providers/html/CareFirstQualityRewards.html>

Q: Which national programs are used to measure quality?

A: Quality Measurement programs include:

- National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) physician recognition programs
- Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) offered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- American Board of Surgery (ABS) Maintenance of Board Certification – Part IV participation in an approved registry (CQR-S grants points for up to 2 registries recognized by the ABS annually)
- American Board of Medical Specialties Patient Safety Improvement Program
- Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT) -use of a certified Electronic Health Record (EHR)
- Fundamentals of Laparoscopic Surgery certification

Q. Do I have to participate in all of the national quality measurement programs?

A. No. You can choose to achieve in any CQR-S quality program that you feel is relevant to you and your patients.

Q. How can I find more information on ways to earn Effectiveness points in CQR-S?

A: For information about the Quality Measurement programs, visit www.carefirst.com >Providers & Physicians > Solution Centers.

Q. What is the deadline for submitting achievements to CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice?

A. The deadline for data submission for the first CQR-S reporting cycle is December 31, 2009.

Q. When will I receive my CQR-S Achievement scores?

A. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice will issue CQR-S Achievement Reports in mid 2010. Earned reimbursement levels will be effective in late 2010.

Q. When do updates occur?

A. CQR-S will follow the same update cycle schedule each year. Achievement and scoring timelines will be reported annually. New reimbursement rates will be effective approximately 90 days after assessment report release. We also expect to identify new programs that give surgeons more options to document quality. New measure options will be announced annually.

Fax Your CQR-S Information to 410-781-7638 or Email to CQR@carefirst.com

Q: Which programs are used to measure service-oriented business practices?

A: Good business practices are evaluated from data collected from the following:

- Electronic claims submission
- Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH) - electronic credentialing active status
- Continuing Medical Education from CareFirst-sponsored physician web-based training
- Attendance at CareFirst sponsored office staff web-based training

Q: The CQR-S program is voluntary. How are data collected for the program?

A: Surgeons may submit documentation of achievement to CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice via email CQR@carefirst.com, or by fax 410-781-7638. They may also authorize national organizations to submit on their behalf, if available. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice will also use internal administrative data for some measures.

Q: Can a surgeon's initial incentive percentage change?

A: Yes. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice will reassess surgeons annually and announce scores and updated reimbursement levels. New reimbursement rates will be effective approximately 90 days later.

Q. Can I decide to participate in the program at a later date?

A. Yes. You may decide to make CQR-S achievements in the future. Meanwhile, you will continue to be reimbursed at the regional network standard fee schedules.

Q. How are points allocated?

A. A surgeon can earn up to 100 effectiveness points from a menu of quality, access, and service-oriented business practice measures. A surgeon's earned fee schedule is based on both dimensions of effectiveness and affordability. Refer to the CQR-S Measure Menu for specific reimbursement levels.

Q. Did you consult with surgeons when developing this program?

A. In developing CQR-S, CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice sought feedback from network surgeons in a wide range of specialties over the course of several years. We also sought feedback from a number of our large employer groups and collaborated with national health care industry organizations including the American Board of Surgery (ABS).

Q. What is Bridges to Excellence?

A. Bridges to Excellence is a not-for-profit organization developed by employers, physicians, health care services, researchers, and other industry experts with a mission to create significant leaps in the quality of care by recognizing and rewarding health care providers who demonstrate that they have implemented comprehensive solutions in the management of patients and deliver safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and patient-centered care.

Bridges to Excellence has announced that it has awarded its first external pay-for-quality program endorsement to CQR-S.

Q. Do I need an electronic medical records system to participate?

A. Electronic medical records (EMRs) or electronic health records (EHRs) are not required to achieve under CQR-S. However, EMRs or EHRs do facilitate quality improvement processes.

Q. Does CQR-S operate on a practice- or physician-level?

A. CQR-S has practice- and physician-level measures. However, it will be scored and reimbursed on a physician level.

Q. Who scores the data?

A. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice will collect national program achievement data from surgeons and also apply several CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice internal measures. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice will score surgeons based on the measures and weights outlined in the CQR-S Measures Menu.

Q. To which regional networks does the program apply?

A. CQR-S increased fee schedules will apply to claims paid under all CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice regional networks (GHMSI,* Participating, Select Preferred Provider and BlueChoice). CQR-S does not apply to CareFirst of Maryland, Inc. networks.

Q. What is the cost of the program?

A. Contact the collaborating organizations to determine their fees. Refer to the External Organization Quality Programs brochure for a list of organizations.

Q. Will physicians receive a good return on their investment in CQR-S?

A. Surgeons can receive up to 107% of their standard fee schedule based on their effectiveness and affordability.

Q. How can I sign up?

By sending CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice documentation of your achievements, you are voluntarily signing up for CQR-S. You can email information to CQR@carefirst.com or fax it to 410-781-7638.

Q. My practice currently meets some of the quality standards. How can I notify you? What will you expect as proof that I am meeting the standards?

A. Please refer to the CQR-S Measure Table Menu. This gives information about measure requirements and acceptable data sources.

Q. Whom do I contact for more information?

A. Visit our website, www.carefirst.com >Providers & Physicians > Solution Centers and select CQR or contact your professional provider relations representative for more information. A list of representatives is provided on the reverse of this document.

Fax Your CQR-S Information to 410-781-7638 or Email to CQR@carefirst.com

* Group Hospitalization and Medical Services, Inc.

PROFESSIONAL PROVIDER RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Name and Region	Telephone	Analyst	Telephone	Specific Area
DC, Northern Virginia & Surrounding Maryland Counties				
Lisa Coleman	410-872-3542	Linda Canada	410-872-3550	Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, & Stafford Counties, Arlington, Alexandria, Rockville & MedStar DC
Hilda Macauley	410-872-3545	Raymond Harrison	410-872-3819	N.W. & S.W. Washington, D.C., Howard University Professional Staff, George Washington Medical Faculty
Kerri Kerr	410-872-3541	Linda Canada	410-872-3550	Fairfax County (except Alexandria)
Dawn Simmons	410-872-3547	Raymond Harrison	410-872-3819	Montgomery County (South of Rockville including Silver Spring, Chevy Chase, Bethesda, White Oak & Takoma Park) and Children's Hospital Professional Staff
Connie Bradford	410-872-3562	Raymond Harrison	410-872-3819	Montgomery County North including Gaithersburg, Damascus, Germantown, Burtonsville, Spencerville, Clarksburg, Howard County & Laurel (Howard County)
Linda Shore	410-872-3549	Raymond Harrison	410-872-3819	N.E. & S.E. Washington D.C., Prince Georges County including the Prince Georges County area of Laurel
Southern and Eastern Maryland Counties, Delaware Counties				
Glenda Ellison-Hyman	410-872-3546	Rosa Gray	410-872-3544	Jessup, Laurel (Anne Arundel County), Anne Arundel (Annapolis & South), Calvert, Charles, & Saint Mary's Counties
Diane Warner	410-763-6315 800-334-3427 ext.6315	Lynn Jones	410-763-6307	Anne Arundel (North of Annapolis), Cecil, Kent & Queen Anne's Counties, Delaware - New Castle County
Tracy Cohee	410-763-6313 800-334-3427 ext.6313	Lynn Jones	410-763-6307	Caroline, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester & Dorchester Counties, Delaware - Kent and Sussex Counties
Central MD				
Karen Brassell-Murphy	410-872-3565	Rosa Gray	410-872-3544	E. Baltimore City, Towson, GBMC, St. Joseph Professional Providers & Mercy
Alexandra Passas-Sizemore	410-872-3567	Rosa Gray	410-872-3544	W. Baltimore City & S.W. Baltimore County
Karen Hudson	410-872-3570	Linda Canada	410-872-3550	S.E. Baltimore County, Harford County, Johns Hopkins & MedStar-North of MD
Deborah Alston	410-872-3568	Rosa Gray	410-872-3544	N.E. & N.W. Baltimore County except Towson
Connie Bradford	410-872-3562	Raymond Harrison	410-872-3819	Laurel (Howard County), Howard County & Montgomery County North
Western Maryland				
Dorothy Woods	410-872-3569	Linda Canada	410-872-3550	Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett & Washington Counties, West Virginia & Pennsylvania



CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield is the shared business name of CareFirst of Maryland, Inc. and Group Hospitalization and Medical Services, Inc. CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and CareFirst BlueChoice, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ® Registered trademark of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ® Registered trademark of CareFirst of Maryland, Inc.