



CQR-S Program Summary

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst) and CareFirst BlueChoice, Inc. (CareFirst BlueChoice) are pleased to issue an invitation to our regional network of general surgeons for a voluntary pay-for-quality program, CareFirst Quality Rewards-Surgeons (CQR-S). We have modified our initial CQR program to be relevant to general surgeons through an additional collaboration with the American Board of Surgery (ABS). There will be no penalty for surgeons who choose not to participate. We are working with other national specialty organizations to adapt CQR for other physician specialties in coming years.

CQR-S includes effectiveness measures in the areas of quality, access, and service-oriented business practices. Some of the measures are based on CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice's administrative data. However, we urge general surgeons to select from the menu of recognition and certification programs offered by leading national clinical quality organizations. In addition to ABS, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), and the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) provided information on their certification programs. You must self-report your participation in many of these quality programs that are based on national evidence-based quality and patient safety programs.

In addition to effectiveness measures, CQR-S has a dimension of affordability, which is based on NCQA's prescribed methodology. By attaining scores high enough in effectiveness and affordability, a provider can achieve a reimbursement level up to 107% of the base fee schedule applicable to all claims in all CareFirst Regional networks. Please reference the enclosed CQR-S Program Measure Table Menu to see the options for earning points, and the reimbursement levels that correspond to different achievement levels.

CQR-S has surgeon- and practice-level measures, and will be administered on a surgeon level. General surgeons submit their external quality program achievements to CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice, or authorize external organizations to do so on their behalf.

The deadline for data submission for the first CQR-S reporting cycle from surgeons is December 31, 2009. CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice will issue CQR-S Achievement Reports in mid 2010, with earned reimbursement levels effective in late 2010. Each year, CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice will announce its CQR-S cycle and a timeline for data collection and CQR-S Achievement Reports. Measures will be expanded to keep pace with the industry and our members' best interests.

CareFirst and CareFirst BlueChoice are proud to announce that, like our CQR program, CQR-S has been endorsed by the Bridges to Excellence organization. Bridges to Excellence is a not-for-profit organization 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.