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| Insights & Analysis

| Value-Based Care

CMS' Annual Quality Conference Underscores Key Quality Improvement Priorities



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Summary

In early February, Avalere attended the annual Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality Conference, an annual gathering that brings stakeholders together to address challenges in healthcare quality improvement and discuss ways to spread these solutions locally and nationally.

The conference underscored new strategic directions and priorities from the administration and featured existing collaborations for high-quality, affordable, patient-centered care. Key takeaways include:

- **Patient empowerment.** CMS Administrator Seema Verma highlighted the various initiatives the agency focused on over the last year, such as the MYHealthEData and eMedicare initiatives. Both projects are intended to empower patients by giving them control of their own medical records, and provide them with online tools to have instant information to easily choose a doctor that will provide the highest quality care at the lowest price. She also featured a new development that will launch in the next year, which is a mobile comparison tool that allows beneficiaries to compare quality ratings across all types of care settings.
- **Meaningful Measures.** Dr. Kate Goodrich, director and CMS chief medical officer, discussed the continued need and application of the “Meaningful Measures” framework to address the highest priorities for quality measurement and improvement to enhance the quality, safety, accessibility, and affordability of healthcare. Various breakout sessions reiterated the

importance of removing low-value measures, reducing clinician burden, and developing and implementing measures that fill gaps in the framework.

- **End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).** Adam Boehler, director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, promoted the agency’s continued interest in the ESRD program, specifically for home dialysis and realignment of current incentives for kidney care. He stressed the importance of working together to link chronic kidney disease and ESRD more closely.
- **Competition.** Administrator Verma shared remarks about the need to foster competition so that providers can compete on quality. Starting this year, CMS now requires hospitals to post their standard price information online, with requirements around the electronic format to ensure this information is easily accessible. She remarked that this will in turn create a healthcare system that delivers better value to patients, and providers and patients alike can expect to see positive results if the system incentivizes the delivery of high-quality care.

She remarked that CMS’ initiatives will increase “price and quality transparency, choice and competition [to] put patients in the driver’s seat” for improving the entire healthcare delivery system. Avalere will continue monitor new insights from the agency and keep you up to date on new developments and their implications.