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NEWS
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Workgroup updates

Thank you for your continued participation in EQIC's affinity [workgroup meetings](#).

This issue of *EQIC News* covers the most recent workgroup meetings for health equity, falls, readmissions and patient and family engagement. Summaries for the sepsis, pressure injuries, infections and adverse drug events/opioid prescribing workgroups are shared in alternating issues.

Health equity

At the Jan. 16 health equity workgroup meeting, members discussed health equity activities and gap analysis progress since the last meeting. Key actions included creating health equity committees, developing strategic plans, leveraging data-driven approaches, screening for social needs, assessing multilevel interventions and using community-based solutions to reduce disparities. Participants shared cultural competency resources to support self-assessment and effective education and training programs.

Members identified the need for staff education and coder training to increase Z-code utilization and documentation of social determinants of health. Hospitals also expressed the need to create an equity or disparities "dashboard" as a next step. Workgroup members shared examples of dashboards from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Pursuing Equity Initiative.

Teams will continue to work on their identified priorities and gap analysis action plans to track progress toward fully implementing each practice recommendation.

Falls

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 22, at 1 p.m.

Readmissions

At the Jan. 23 readmission workgroup meeting, hospital teams discussed recent readmission prevention-focused work at their facilities. Participants also shared that they recently re-started prior initiative work, such as evaluation of readmission risk assessments, procedure and scripting for follow-up phone calls, and care partner work. One hospital shared that they have begun collaboration efforts with community skilled nursing facilities after identifying target facilities using readmission data and analysis.

[EQIC tools and resources](#) are available to assist your team's readmission efforts.

Patient and family engagement

At the Jan. 25 workgroup meeting, participants discussed unique ways that hospitals have engaged patients and encouraged staff members to view patients as resources for feedback. Members shared ideas and were provided with EQIC's patient and family engagement eLearning course as a resource to kickstart orientation of the newly recruited patient and family advisors. Other resources and ideas to sustain a patient and family advisory council were shared, including promoting staff engagement, developing agendas in advance and using PFAC for big or small quality improvement projects.

Announcements

Culture of Safety Survey reports are now available

EQIC administered the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Hospital's Survey on Patient Safety Culture last fall. Reports and debriefing and action planning tools are now available for participating hospitals on the EQIC [data portal](#).

EQIC will hold an [informational session](#) on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 11 a.m., to review report functionality and address any questions.

Tools and resources

Navigating the new CMS health equity measure requirements: Is your organization ready?

Wondering how your hospital will juggle the new requirements for 2023 and 2024? Look no further! Hospitals participating in the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program must meet three measures (social determinants of health-01, SDOH-2 and hospital commitment to health equity) beginning with the calendar year 2023 reporting period/fiscal year 2025 payment determination and for subsequent years.

EQIC recommends reviewing the [HCHE attestation guide](#) to confirm your hospital has engaged in the qualifying activities described. Hospitals also should [train staff](#) in the culturally sensitive collection of, at a minimum, REaL and self-reported SDOH information using your electronic health record, and stratifying key performance indicators by demographic and/or SDOH variables to identify equity gaps.

Building a screening and referral process into your workflow using a [tool](#) that covers all five mandated health-related social needs questions and establishing formal processes to evaluate your data and review with senior leadership will be fundamental for success. Refer to the [SDOH Measure FAQ](#), [Hospital IQR Reporting Program Guide](#), [resources and tools](#), and [important dates and deadlines](#).

Education

"I want to, I just don't know how": A practical guide to advancing health equity

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges and intensified systemic health disparities that have pushed the conversation around health equity from “why is this important?” to “how do we do this?” Based on regulatory requirements from CMS and The Joint Commission, hospitals have a critical opportunity to be at the forefront of building more resilient communities and addressing social determinants of health across readmissions, chronic diseases and other patient harm areas. This session ([recording](#) and [presentation](#)) highlights best practices and examples for successfully implementing health equity strategies within hospital settings.

Podcast series: Buprenorphine initiation in the emergency department

Learn from nationally recognized experts in four, short [podcasts](#) about the importance and effectiveness of starting buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder in the ED. Hospital leaders receive research-backed advice on the technology tools, clinical evidence and referral networks that support this safe and effective first-line treatment in the ED – and how this research has been translated into action.

The series is also available for no-cost Continuing Medical Education credit with free registration at [myCME.com](#). CMS and the National Institute on Drug Abuse Clinical Trials Network Dissemination Initiative collaborated to support the development of this resource.

Questions?

Please contact [Cathleen Wright](#) or your [EQIC project manager](#) with any questions.