

CMS Awards Healthcentric Advisors \$53M Quality Innovation Contract *To partner with Qualidigm in CT. to serve New England*

PROVIDENCE – The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently awarded a \$53 million Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) contract to Healthcentric Advisors, the incumbent Rhode Island Quality Improvement Organization (QIO).

The new QIN-QIO contracts, awarded to 14 organizations across the United States, represent a revitalization of CMS's long outstanding QIO work. In order to successfully execute the contract initiatives, Healthcentric Advisors, the prime contractor for this work, has formalized a strategic partnership with Qualidigm, the incumbent QIO for Connecticut.

Together, Healthcentric Advisors and Qualidigm will serve as a single QIN-QIO for the six New England states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The five-year contract, which is the third-largest award in the country, will begin on August 1, 2014.

The new QIN-QIO contract awards represent the second phase of the restructuring of the QIO program, the largest federal program dedicated to healthcare quality. The previous QIO body of work will be split into

two separate contract structures: one for medical case review and appeals, performed by Beneficiary and Family-Centered Care QIOs (BFCC-QIOs), and one for quality improvement and technical assistance, performed by the QIN-QIOs. The medical case review and appeals responsibilities previously performed by Healthcentric Advisors, Qualidigm, Masspro (the incumbent Massachusetts QIO), and the Northeast Health Care Quality Foundation (the incumbent New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont QIO) will now be performed by Annapolis-based Livanta, LLC. This separation of work is a contract requirement set forth by CMS.

"Healthcentric Advisors and Qualidigm have a long history of working successfully with hospitals, nursing homes, physicians, and other providers and stakeholders in our respective states. We've created solutions to improve patient care and population health while lowering healthcare costs," said John Keimig, president and CEO of Healthcentric Advisors. "We look forward to bringing that same spirit of partnership and collaboration to the entire New England region. We will support and assist providers in all settings, share knowledge and best

practices, and accelerate improvements in health care throughout the six-state region."

Through a coordinated regional approach, Healthcentric Advisors and Qualidigm will work with providers and communities on data-driven quality initiatives to improve the quality of care across the New England region. While overseeing work for the entire region, Healthcentric Advisors will focus its efforts in Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island and Qualidigm in Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Healthcentric Advisors and Qualidigm will work across New England on strategic initiatives such as reducing healthcare associated infections, reducing readmissions and medication errors, working with nursing homes to improve care for residents, supporting clinical practices in using interoperable health information technology to coordinate care, promoting prevention activities, reducing cardiac disease and diabetes, reducing health care disparities and improving patient and family engagement. The partnership will also provide technical assistance for improvement in CMS value-based purchasing programs, including the physician value-based modifier program. ♦

New Law on Expediting COE Process Passed

PROVIDENCE – The governor has signed legislation passed recently by the General Assembly that is designed to help expedite the Department of Health "certificate of need" process and to help open doors for domestic medical tourism companies to locate in Rhode Island.

The legislation was developed to address a specific situation that arose last year involving an out-of-state health care provider in its attempts to obtain a home nursing care provider's license and meet other requirements set by the Department of Health.

Among the law's provisions are:

- In regard to the certificate of need process, it will provide for consideration of an expeditious review request and require that a decision in connection with that review be rendered within 30 days.

- It will, under certain circumstances, provide an exemption from the certificate of need requirements to the domestic medical tourism industry and multi-practice health facilities.
- It will reduce and restructure the composition of the Health Services Council from 24 to 12 members.
- It will set a moratorium on all new healthcare services and equipment until July 1, 2015, during which time the Department of Health in conjunction with the Health Care Planning and Accountability Advisory Council will conduct a statewide healthcare utilization and capacity study and prepare a statewide healthcare plan and inventory of healthcare facilities, equipment and health services. ♦