

## State Office of Rural Health

### Quality Improvement to Support and Sustain Critical Access Hospitals

The Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (FLEX) Program is a federal initiative, created by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. The FLEX program awards grants to State Governments to strengthen the rural health care system. These grants are administered by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

The Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP) is a quality improvement activity under the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) grant program. The goal of MBQIP is to improve the quality of care provided in small, rural Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs). This is being done by increasing the voluntary quality data reporting by CAHs, and then driving quality improvement activities based on the data.

The Georgia FLEX Quality Improvement initiative includes:

#### Financial Support for Quality Reporting:

- Provision of web-based software for data collection and submission. Web-based reports with graphing, trending and statistical capability are available immediately to users.
- National comparison reports for core measures support data reporting/trending to hospital leadership, board members and medical staff.
- Provision of web-based AHRQ Patient Safety Culture Survey process – Improving Patient Safety in Hospitals.

#### Georgia FLEX Quick Facts

- Since 2005, Georgia has received more than 5.7 million in FLEX grant funding
- FLEX grants support Georgia's 30 Critical Access Hospital

#### Technical Support for Quality Improvement

- A dedicated quality and patient safety advisor supports quality improvement education, training and technical support to critical access hospitals.
- Development of Quality Leader "Boot Camp" and peer rural hospital networking to support critical access hospital quality leader role development.

#### Key Results

- In the last year 29 of the 30 critical access hospitals participated in Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Program (MBQIP)
- 90 percent of Georgia critical access hospitals implemented a Patient Safety Culture Survey
- 100 percent of participating CAHs experience improvement in at least one measure
- Two Georgia critical access hospitals achieved four STAR HCAHPS rating in the last two quarters.

## Support and Sustain CAHs

- This project provides an opportunity for individual hospitals to look at their own data, measure their outcomes against other CAHs and partner with other hospitals in the state around quality improvement initiatives to improve outcomes and provide the highest quality care to each and every one of their patients.

### For More Information

Visit the Georgia Department of Community Health State Office of Rural Health website:

<https://dch.georgia.gov/hospital-services-program-0>