

**NCQA's Back Pain Recognition Program  
Designated as PQRI Registry by CMS**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

The 2006 Tax Relief and Health Care Act mandated the establishment of a physician quality reporting system, including an incentive payment for eligible professionals (EPs) who satisfactorily report data on quality measures for covered services furnished to Medicare beneficiaries. CMS named this program the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI).

The Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 authorize CMS to make PQRI incentive payments for satisfactorily reporting quality measures data. For 2010, EPs who meet the criteria for satisfactory submission of quality measures data for services furnished during the reporting period (calendar year 2010) will earn an incentive payment of 2.0 percent of their total allowed charges for Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) covered professional services furnished during the reporting period.

**NCQA's Back Pain Recognition Program (BPRP) has been accepted as a registry for submission of PQRI data on behalf of EPs seeking payment in 2010.**

**More information about the PQRI and its potential financial incentives are available at the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri/>.**

**[Frequently asked questions about PQRI and the BPRP program follow.](#)**

**Q. Does the NCQA BPRP meet the CMS requirements for PQRI reporting?**

**A.** Yes. NCQA has been designated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as a "qualified" Back Pain registry for PQRI.

**Q. Is NCQA establishing a separate Recognition program for PQRI reporting?**

**A.** No. While there is some additional information that will be required to meet the PQRI rules, the BPRP is closely aligned with the PQRI requirements.

**Q. Is the reporting period different for PQRI from the BPRP abstraction period?**

**A.** Yes. PQRI requires data to be submitted for patients seen during the 12-month calendar year of January through December 2010.

**Q. Is there any change in the number of patients for whom data must be collected and reported?**

**A.** Yes. PQRI requires data from 30 patients seen during the 12-month reporting period. However, PQRI rules are compatible with NCQA's patient selection methodology. For BPRP Recognition, individual physicians reported on 35 patients or 25 patients if submitting multiple physicians at one time from one group.

**Q. Is the PQRI submission good for the entire Recognition period?**

**A.** No. PQRI reporting is for one year only (2010). A participating clinician would have to submit data for each calendar year reporting period.

**Q. Does the data submitted have to be on Medicare patients only?**

**A.** No. Non-Medicare patients may be included in registry-based reporting for measures groups. However, at least 2 of the patients must be enrolled in the traditional Medicare Fee for Service program.

**Q. Are there any changes in the BPRP agreements?**

**A.** Yes. Each clinician must sign an additional form allowing the release of the data to CMS for PQRI qualification. That form will be available to download from the NCQA Web site.

**Q. Are there changes in the BPRP applicant information?**

A. Yes. NCQA added fields for the National Provider Identifier (NPI) and Tax Identification Number (TIN) required by CMS. “*Instructions for PQRI Qualification with NCQA BPRP Program*” explains how to provide this information on the Authorization and Clinician Data Form.

**Q. Are there any changes in the rules for identifying eligible patients?**

A. Yes. As described above, at least 2 of the 30 patients must be enrolled in the traditional Medicare Fee for Service program.

**Q. Can I begin data collection now or do I have to wait until the end of the year?**

A. The “*Instructions for PQRI Qualification with the NCQA BPRP Program*” includes the reporting period requirements. If you can meet the reporting period requirements for the required number of eligible patients, you can submit your data to NCQA any time prior to 12/31/2010.

[Frequently asked PQRI questions for BPRP Recognized clinicians and clinicians applying for BPRP Recognition follow.](#)

[For NCQA BPRP Recognized clinicians:](#)

**Q. I've already earned Recognition in 2010. Does that automatically qualify me for the 2010 PQRI financial incentives?**

A. No. Recognized clinicians will need to submit additional data to qualify for PQRI incentive payments.

**Q. What if our clinicians have been recognized by NCQA for the BPRP in 2008 or 2009?**

A. CMS will only accept data on patients treated during the 2010 reporting period and there are additional requirements that would not be satisfied by a previous submission.

**Q. What are these additional requirements?**

A. NCQA must receive a written authorization from each clinician that his/her data can be shared with CMS, at least 30 patients are required in the submission, and data must be submitted on at least 2 Medicare Fee for Service patients.

**Q. So if our clinicians are already recognized by NCQA's BPRP they would have to submit data again to qualify for the PQRI program?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Can our clinicians use the online data collection tool we already have?**

A. Yes. NCQA provides a web-enabled data collection tool (DCT). You may submit your data utilizing the web-enabled DCT you already have. There is additional information required for PQRI qualification. The additional information can be submitted along with the DCT you already have. See the posted “*Instructions for PQRI Qualification with the NCQA BPRP Program*” available to download from the NCQA Web site.

**Q. Our clinicians were recognized in a group of more than 9 physicians for BPRP, can we resubmit as a group to qualify for PQRI?**

A. No, PQRI qualification is by the individual clinician. The data is associated with a clinician's NPI (National Provider Identifier) even though the payment will be rolled up to the practice's TIN (Tax Identification Number). See the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri/>.

**Q. How soon do we have to resubmit to have our data qualify for PQRI submission? If we resubmit sooner do we get the PQRI bonus sooner?**

A. You will have until December 31, 2010 to resubmit your data to NCQA. All of the submitted clinician PQRI data will be submitted to CMS by NCQA in March of 2011. More information about timing of payment by CMS is available at the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri/>.

**Q. How much will I have to pay to resubmit data to NCQA if I am already recognized?**

A. The submission fee will be \$150 (per clinician) for resubmitting data for PQRI. This will not extend your recognition period.

**Q. How much will our medical group have to pay to resubmit data to NCQA if the clinicians applied as a group for recognition?**

A. Each clinician must meet the PQRI requirements with their resubmitted data. The submission fee will be \$150 (per clinician) for resubmitting data for PQRI.

**For clinicians currently applying for or considering applying for NCQA's BPRP program:**

**Q. Who is eligible to participate in NCQA's Back Pain Recognition Program?**

A. The following clinicians are eligible to participate: Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Osteopathy, and Doctor of Chiropractic.

**Q. Is there any change to the materials and requirements I've already received to apply for the BPRP?**

A. Yes. We must receive a written authorization from each clinician that his/her data can be shared with CMS. The 35 patients necessary for Recognition will meet the 30 patient minimum required by CMS as long as the data for 30 patients include at least 2 Medicare fee for service patients and their visit dates were in 2010.

**Q. Where can I get the NCQA PQRI requirements?**

A. See the posted "*Instructions for PQRI Qualification with the NCQA BPRP Program*" available to download from the NCQA web site.

**Q. Is there any change to the fee schedule?**

A. No, NCQA is providing for a clinician's submission to PQRI as an added feature to the Recognition process.

**Q. Can I submit data to NCQA for PQRI without applying for BPRP recognition?**

A. No, the PQRI submission is an option in addition to submitting data for NCQA Recognition in the BPRP program.

**Q. Can a clinician qualify for PQRI incentive payment through NCQA without achieving BPRP Recognition?**

A. Yes. NCQA must still verify that the submitted data is reported according to the patient selection and data abstraction requirements of the BPRP program. However, the clinician does not have to achieve a passing score.

**Q. Can I apply for BPRP Recognition without participating on the PQRI program?**

A. Yes, in fact you would have to sign the waiver to permit NCQA to transmit your data to CMS.

**Q. Why should our clinicians pay for the NCQA Recognition program when they can submit data to CMS for PQRI without charge?**

A. Many practices have not developed the capability for claims-based reporting to CMS for PQRI. The NCQA submittal will consist of a one-time chart abstraction of the Back Pain measures for 30 patients and the clinicians will be qualified for their PQRI payment for all of their 2010 Medicare Part B claims. Clinicians also receive other benefits of NCQA recognition such as P4P rewards and credit for ABFM part IV MOC requirements.

**Q. Can groups of clinicians continue to submit data to NCQA for BPRP Recognition and qualify for PQRI?**

**A.** No, PQRI qualification is by the individual clinician. The data is associated with a clinician's NPI (National Provider Identifier) even though the payment will be rolled up to the practice's TIN (Tax Identification Number). See the CMS website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri/>.

**Q. How soon do we have to apply to have our data qualify for PQRI submission? If we submit sooner do we get the PQRI bonus sooner?**

**A.** You will have until December 31, 2010 to submit your data to NCQA. All of the submitted clinician PQRI data will be submitted to CMS by NCQA in March of 2011. More information about timing of payment by CMS is available at the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri/>.