

CMS Seeks Public Comment on Defining QIO Service Areas
Comments Accepted through Friday, May 31

On May 2, 2013, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a request for information (RFI) notice seeking comment about how we can best organize our national cadre of Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) contractors. We will use the comments from this notice to inform future QIO-related acquisitions.

The notice, numbered “HHS-CMS-CCSQ-RFI-13-QIOProgram: Request for Information to Establish Services Areas for Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs),” was posted to the FedBizOpps.gov website, a free Internet portal that advertises procurement opportunities—or requests for information about future procurement opportunities—across most of the Federal government. A direct link to the notice is on our website at <http://go.cms.gov/qios> or on the FedBizOpps website at <http://go.usa.gov/Ty8d>.

About What Is CMS Seeking Comment?

We seek your comments about four potential options we may use to divide work among a varying number of QIO contractors into service areas (jurisdictions or regions) that are focused on quality-improvement-related work only. We are also seeking fresh new ideas about other options we could consider in organizing QIO contractors.

Regardless of how we organize QIOs going forward, we remain committed to keeping grassroots energy and local-level improvement at the heart of what QIOs do.

Why Is CMS Seeking Comment?

In 1984, CMS issued its first set of contracts to one organization in all 50 states, DC, and other territories to serve as that state/jurisdiction’s QIO contractor. Since then, the field of health care quality improvement has blossomed tremendously. The need for QIOs has evolved from utilization review alone to convening complex local communities that can span state boundaries, particularly as health delivery systems become more horizontally and vertically integrated and new alliances form.

Now that the QIOs’ role in health care quality improvement has changed, it is time to think about new and better ways to approach QIO work. Beginning in August 2014, we will launch the next round of QIO Program contracts with a new approach to essential program operations and the service areas for QIOs. In doing so, we hope to maximize program efficiency while improving the quality of care Medicare beneficiaries receive.

How Can You Be Heard?

All comments are welcomed, though comments about how QIOs distribute themselves geographically to best drive large-scale clinical quality improvement are of particular interest. Comments are requested via email by 4:00 pm ET on **Friday, May 31, 2013**. Unfortunately, we cannot answer questions about the RFI, nor can we accept comments in any way other than the email address listed in the RFI text. **Please read the RFI in its entirety, including its Appendix, before commenting.** Get the full text at <http://go.usa.gov/Ty8d>. Learn more about QIOs at <http://go.cms.gov/qios>.

Thank you for your commitment to improving the quality, safety, and efficiency of health care for millions of Medicare beneficiaries.