



Quality
Insights

Quality Payment Program Support Center

360 Support: Free Quality Payment Program (QPP) Assistance from Quality Insights - Transcript from Live Webinar

Friday, June 2, 2017

Crystal Welch:

Well hello and welcome to 360 Support: Free Quality Payment Program or QPP Assistance from Quality Insights. We are so glad you were able to join us this afternoon and we appreciate so many of you joining our webinar presentation. I'm certainly looking forward to a great session today. And we're also excited to be joined on the call today with our QPP staff serving Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia just to help prepare for and participate in the Quality Payment Program.

Just quickly with the agenda, I wanted to talk about things that include, let's see, an introduction to Quality Insights an Overview of the Quality Payment Program by our QIN Network Task Lead, Kathy Wild, an Overview of the Quality Insights, Quality Payment Support Center with our QPP Customer Service Specialist Amy Weiser, and then Shanen Wright will be giving you information about Opportunities for Coordination and Collaboration and also talk about an exciting partnership opportunity. We will get to our speakers in just a moment, but first, many of you listening are listening by your computer speakers or maybe you're dialed-in on your telephone, so just please keep in mind that we will have opportunities to submit your questions and answers, so please just use the Q&A feature in your web-x player at any time.

Note that you may need to click on that "chat" button at the top or the "Q&A" button in order to access this feature. Then we will get to as many questions as time will allow at the conclusion of our presentation. So first up, I would just like to introduce Shanen Wright who is going to be filling in today for Dr. Berg with our introduction and he is the Associate Project Director for Quality Insights with our QPP-SURS project. Shanen, I will just go ahead and turn it over to you.

Shanen Wright:

Thank you so much Crystal, and thank you everybody for joining us for this webinar presentation today. We're very excited to tell you about all of the wealth of services related to the Quality Payment Program that we have to offer here at Quality Insights. But first I'd like to provide you a high level overview of our organization. I know many of you may be familiar with us from our QIN-QIO or regional extension work, but there are a wide range of services that Quality Insights provides.

We are a not-for-profit healthcare quality improvement company with a mission of bringing people and information together to improve health. We strive to be

a change agent, partner, and integrator of local organizations collaborating to improve care. We know that many of you joining us today share that similar mission and are a local organization working in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, and New Jersey and we're excited to be partnering with you.

We're committed to achieving the national quality strategy of the Federal government and its goals of better care, smarter spending, and healthier people. We're headquartered in Charleston, West Virginia and are now in our 43rd year of existence, and also have offices in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, Cranberry, New Jersey, and Richmond, Virginia, with staff located in all of the states that we serve. Our staff consists of around 200 physicians, nurses, health services researchers, measures developers, statisticians, data analysts, and educators, all dedicated to improving healthcare quality. As an organization, we collaborate with Federal and state agencies, as well as private organizations that are also committed to improving the quality of healthcare across the United States.

Related to CMS's quality program, we have a wide wealth of services and experience to offer, all free for providers in our states. First of all, we are the Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization better known as a QIN-QIO serving the states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, and Louisiana. Just recently we've become the quality payment program small underserved rural support contractor for the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

We first began preparing clinicians to successfully participate in the Quality Payment Program in August 2016 as part of our QIN-QIO work. We are now expanding this support to small practices through the QPP-SURS program. This builds on extensive practice consultation experience, that we had through our experience as health information technology regional extension centers in all of these states that help put 7,000 clinicians meet meaningful use. That would be in West Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. For some of you who may have collaborated with us as a regional extension center, you may know us by a different name. In Pennsylvania we were branded as PA Reach East and PA Reach West, the Quality Insights of Delaware: Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center or the West Virginia Regional Health Information Technology Extension Center. All of that experience that we have gained through those projects we are now bringing to our QIN-QIO and QPP-SURS work.

Quality Insights offers training, educational resources, and direct one-on-one technical assistance for QPP eligible clinicians. Our QIN-QIO focuses on practices with 16 or more clinicians, while QPP-SURS focuses on practices with 15 or fewer clinicians. The main thing to remember is that Quality Insights is the go-to organization for free expertise and technical assistance related to the Quality Payment Program.

Through our QIN-QIO work, we also offer programs and learning and action networks to help all practices meet quality improvement goals, which feature an emphasis on a wide range of topics, including cardiovascular health, diabetes, antibiotic stewardship, immunizations, opioid misuse and diversion, and the annual wellness visits.

With the Quality Payment Program, we have several priorities that we are focusing on, which include collaborating and coordinating with existing partnerships and initiatives. We want to establish and lead partnership activities as community needs arise of all programs and educational opportunities to best meet the needs of participants, provide excellent customer service, and ultimately help 90% of the eligible clinicians in the states we serve successfully participate in the Quality Payment Program.

This involves a catalytic collaboration of essential behaviors that we'll be focusing on throughout all of our QPP work, which includes prioritizing learning, focusing on systems thinking and acting, democratizing access to assets, and most of all, building long-term, diverse, transformational relationships, which is what we are focusing on today by collaborating with stakeholders like you.

For more information about Quality Insights, you can visit our corporate website at qualityinsights.org, we have a QIN-QIO specific website as well at qualityinsights-qin.org, the QPP's website is qppsupport.org, and you can also see general email addresses for inquiries. A little later in the presentation we'll introduce you to some of our subject matter experts related to these specific areas, and you're always free to reach out to them as well.

At this time, it's my great pleasure to introduce one of those subject matter experts, that's Kathy Wild. She is the QIN-QIO's Network Task Lead for the QPP Program and is based out of Delaware. Kathy, please take it away.

Kathy Wild:

Thank you Shanen and welcome everybody. So today we have heard the term QPP Quality Payment Program several times, so I just wanted to give you a high level overview of what that entails.

So basically CMS created a new program for Medicare providers in order to pay them. Instead of paying them fee for service as they have for several years, they are now going to reimburse providers based on the quality of care they provide, based on performance measures. And the important thing that we want to get everybody involved is that it is not just focused on clinicians. The way to improve the quality of care involves patient and family members, office staff, stakeholders such as yourself, CMS, and then Quality Insights also. We can all work together to improve patient outcomes. As you learn with your practices and partners, you will see that the quality measures all have impact in all of these different areas.

There's two different tracks on the Quality Payment Program. CMS anticipates that about 95% of the clinicians that currently bill Medicare Part B will participate in what's called the MIPS Track, Medicare-Based Incentive Payment System. Only about 5% this year will participate in advanced APM. Their overall goal is down the road to get everybody in these alternative payment models. However, there are risks, there are shared risks involved with that, but if a provider does participate in one, they are, can avoid the MIPS penalty.

What exactly is MIPS? That is the track like I said that most of the clinicians are going to be in. That really streamlines three programs that Medicare has had for several years. You might have heard the terms PQRS, Meaningful Use, and Value-Based Modifier. They're combining those into one big reporting program called the Merit-Based Incentive Payment Program. There is also a new category called Improvement Activities that did not exist before, that will be effective this year in 2017. Basically there's a list of 92 activities, clinicians can pick as many as they need to try to get the maximum score of 40 points for that category. Once again, it is all about improving patient care.

The MIPS score, what CMS will do is take points from each of the different categories and they will add them together and come up with a total MIPS score. You might want to look at that as similar to a grade point average that you had when you were in high school or college. The quality category would be similar to reading, improvement activities similar to math, advancing care information similar to science. You get a score in each of those categories, it gets converted by the percentage of the weight for this year, and then they'll come up with one total score. Then that score determines what type of payment adjustment the clinician or the group will have in 2019. 2017 performance impacts what happens to the payments in 2019.

As I alluded to a second ago, there are some different weights for 2017. Once again, this is for people that are not in a Medicare shared savings plan, ACO, or an APM because they do have different weights for those categories. So this would be anybody that's in the straight MIPS program. Quality category will equal 60% of the weight, advancing care information 25%, and in proven activities 15%. Please note that there are special circumstances for specific clinicians on where they can get a category re-weighted. I'm not going to get into any of those particulars today, but the majority of clinicians will follow these weights.

I think I told you a minute ago that the scores that they get this year will impact their 2019 payment. If a clinician does not participate and report at least one measure to Medicare this year, they would have zero points, and therefore they would have a 4% negative payment adjustment in 2019. If a provider reports just one measure for one patient, then they could earn three points, which is the threshold that CMS sets where it would be completely neutral and the provider would not be penalized, but he would not receive any type of incentive either. The majority of clinicians will probably fall into this next category where they can earn between four and 69 points. What that means is they would

qualify for a positive payment adjustment. The exact amount of that is going to matter on how many providers have that negative payment adjustment because CMS did make this a completely budget neutral program.

What we want to do as Quality Insights staff is work with all the clinicians in our states to try to get them in this last category because if they can score at least 70 points, then they are eligible not only for that regular payment adjustment, but they're also eligible to an exceptional bonus payment pool that is \$500 million and that left for the next six years that they'll be eligible to do that. Once again, that is our overall goal, to try to get them to earn as many as points as they can get.

Some of the key dates is that this first year in 2017 it began already, but that it's a completely transitional flexible year. CMS is allowing several different reporting options. They are not making it mandatory reporting for one year, they are not even making it mandatory reporting for 90 days. A clinician can pick one measure from one of the categories or they can pick an improvement activity, complete it for the minimum requirement, and just report that and then they would satisfy their MIPS reporting for 2017.

The data submission deadline will be next year on March 31, 2018, which means that they'll have 90 full days to review all of their data, all of their performance data from 2017 so then at that point they can figure out what reporting period they actually want to submit to CMS. They can look at different time periods, it doesn't have to be 90 days, it could be 110 and find where they have the highest performance measure rate for each of the different categories, because the quality category can have a different performance period from the other two periods. Each one is separate. The only thing that has to be the same for all of their reporting is each practice would have to determine whether they want to report MIPS data at the individual clinician level or as a practice. Once again, the Medicare Part B adjustments based on their performance this year will become effective beginning January 1, 2019.

As I stated, this year, the payment adjustments will be 4%+/- and then you can see consecutively they increase all the way up in 2022 there is a 9% potential to have a payment adjustment. So it's important to get on-board now to see what the measures are, try to increase your performance. As you can see, it really will affect your Medicare reimbursement in the future.

This is the screen just to show you the QPP support information for large practices. Just so you know, CMS has defined that as a practice that has at least 16 MIPS eligible clinicians. They have defined that this year to be physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialist. In future years, probably beginning in 2019 they will be adding more different clinicians to bill Medicare Part B, such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, but for now each one of the clinicians I just mentioned, they are considered a MIPS clinicians. So we would include them when we count how many clinicians are in the practice.

All right, and now I would like to turn it over to Amy Weiser who is one of the customer service specialists that is focusing on the Quality Payment Program support for the small practices that have 15 and under clinicians, those that are underserved, and in rural communities. Go ahead Amy.

Amy Weiser:

Thank you so much Kathy for that great overview. I'm going to talk to you about the support for practices in our QPP Small Underserved Rural Support Center. We have customized technical support pathway for small practices, which again, are those with 15 or fewer clinicians in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or West Virginia to participate in the Medicare Quality Payment Program. The focus is on practices in rural locations, health professional shortage areas, and medically underserved areas. Again, our service is free and funded by CMS.

As Kathy mentioned, these are the list of the eligible clinicians who can receive support in QPP-SURS; again physicians, podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified registered nurse anesthetists. All of them are eligible for Quality Insights QPP support for up to five years. Also, as Kathy mentioned, in coming years, CMS is planning to allow other types of Medicare clinicians to be involved in the MIPS program.

How the QPP support center will provide customized support? We will be using ... we have web-based quality improvement plans and resources that are available. They're simple, curated, and we have online tools to improve quality and maximize scores. As Kathy mentioned, the scores for MIPS are very important and our goal is to help practices to achieve the highest scores possible to be able to tap into the positive payment adjustments that will be available.

Training; live webinars, online chats, e-learns, and learning action network opportunities. Technical assistance; quality transformation experts are available online and via telephone to answer questions and personally guide clinicians through the QPP process. We really want to become the trusted advisors for our practices and clinicians to help them with the process. Networking; opportunities to connect with local mentors or share experiences, questions, and solutions with other small practices.

We have a 360-degree approach to support. It's self-directed with e-based learning, it's interactive with online seminars. We have social media and email outreach. We have personalized attention. This all begins with online registration and assessment and ends with QPP proficiency at level three. I'll talk more about those levels in a few minutes. I also want to say with the 360-degree support there's no wrong turn with our experts that we have available for our practices and clinicians.

We have the Quality Insights QPP-SURS website. It provides access to a full suite of learning materials and expert technical assistance including quality improvement plan for all levels of experience. No matter where you're starting

in the process with MIPS, we are able to help you and your clinicians. A growing library of curated links to resources from expert sources, the ability to submit online requests for assistance and receive response within in one business day, access to training, education, and networking opportunities, and self-directed e-learns, which will be coming later this year.

What you're seeing here on this page is our www.qppsupport.org home page for our website. This is where the big ideas for small practices all begins.

The next tab is the "about us" tab and it just gives a little background again about Quality Insights and the services we are offering for small practices in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. There's also a "contact us" tab, which is available for you to reach out to us if you're having any difficulties or problems with navigating the website for example. This is where you would get news, the latest news about MIPS and QPP. You can also register here and once you're registered, this is where you can log in.

This is the page that shows you the online registration process. It's the beginning actually and it gives you a little instruction on what you might like to have in front of you to prepare to submit your registration.

Registration is a two-step process. Step one is to confirm eligibility and provide basic practice information to create an account on our website. Step two is to complete a practice readiness assessment, giving the practice transformation specialists the information that they need to provide support and allow us to track your progress. Completing both steps unlocks the quality improvement plans, resources, events, and ability to submit technical assistance requests. This process takes only about 20 minutes.

Once a clinician or practice registers, they will be automatically directed to the "My QPP" landing page, which is what you see here. The "My QPP" landing page provides information about three quality improvement plan levels, which I mentioned earlier. The levels are designed to provide QPP education beginning with basic information at level one through intermediate learning at level two and then more advanced learning through level three, the final level of learning. All clinicians and practices begin at level one regardless of their readiness assessment score.

This is the page that shows you the customized improvement plans. Level one, level two, and level three. This is an example of the level one plan. Level one consists of five easy steps. Step one is to visit the CMS/QPP website. Step two provides guidance for clinicians of they have not yet adopted an EHR. This page shows steps three, four, and five. For step three, we provide guidance of the necessary EHR certification upgrades that are due before January 1, 2018. Step four is guidance on reviewing each of the missed categories. Finally, step five, pick your pace for MIPS for 2017. Each step has links to make learning streamlined and efficient. This is carried out throughout our website for all improvement levels. Rest assured, our expert QPP support will not end after

level three learning is complete. We are committed to provide ongoing support for all of our QPP-SURS members.

We also have developed a fantastic resource page. The resources are curated by level. They are easily accessible on our website with filters to make searching easy and efficient. We also have a "Q&A" tab, which provides some of the most commonly asked questions and answers related to QPP and MIPS as well.

Another important piece of the service that we provide to our members is our direct technical assistance. Practices can submit requests directly from the website into Quality Insights tracking and monitoring system and they will receive a follow-up within one business day.

What you're seeing is the Quality Insights MIPS reimbursement calculator. This is the cover page. The MIPS calculator for 2017 is basically a spreadsheet with multiple tabs, which practices can use to help determine what their MIPS score might be based on the measures that they are selecting. It can be thought of as a sandbox. Practices can consider other measures if needed and make adjustments to improve their scores in the MIPS category.

This is an example of one of the tabs in the calculator. As a practice adds the information, this page displays the scoring of each of the categories. This demonstrates the MIPS calculator exit report. Once all of the information is entered into the appropriate fields of the calculator, the practice can view and print their exit report. Again, this is designed to help the practice with process improvement to see if they need to maybe think of other measures to utilize or add some measures to back up some of the information that they're already gathering to make sure that they can achieve the highest score.

On the horizon, the MIPS calculator is only one of many fantastic tools and resources available to our members. Our resource library will continue to grow as more tools and support resources become available. We'll have more education and support resources, we are already offering regular e-bulletins with MIPS and QPP updates, there will be opportunities for self-guided and interactive learning and also more networking opportunities.

What can practices do now to get started? They can go to our website www.qppsupport.org and register or they can contact us for individualized support at our email address or our phone number below. You can also follow us on social media for regular updates, Facebook and Twitter, which were recently launched.

Now I'd like to turn over the presentation back to Shanen Wright. Shanen?

Shanen Wright:

Thanks so much Amy, really appreciate that overview of QPP-SURS. Now for today's presentation what we're going to do is talk about how we envision a

partnership relationship unfolding with the Quality Insights QPP team and some of the opportunities that we have on the horizon.

First of all, we want to share that it's our goal with partnerships to help you and the clinicians you work with to succeed in QPP, that's our overarching goal. We know this is a big transformation for providers and we want to be here to help and help supplement the plans and activities that you already have, whether you already have an initiative or maybe you have one on the horizon. We want to avoid duplication of effort. We're not looking for redundancies. We're not trying to compete with any existing initiatives, so it's very important to know that we want win-win opportunities for you as partners and for us as well. Keep in mind that we are a publicly funded initiative. CMS is paying for this project on both sides, for the large and the small practices, so we really feel that we have a position here where we can help facilitate a neutral forum for all partners with a vested interest in QPP to exchange information.

Most of all, we want to help make valuable connections. Not just for us, but for you as well. When we all work together and we're all aware of what all organizations are doing, that is what helps set the stage for QPP's success among clinicians in all of the states that we're working in.

Our project goal, as we mentioned before, is to help 90% of the eligible clinicians in the states we serve participating QPP. That's a big number. That equates to about 22,000 practices at the end of year one and keeping them engaged, so this is no small endeavor at all. Reaching, engaging, and helping that many people. We're really starting, as this is a new initiative, we mentioned our QIN-QIO has only been doing this work for about a year and QPP-SURS is a relatively new project, just several months old, so at this point we're really working hard to help get the word out that free QPP assistance is available. We have a very simple one-page e-flier that you can forward via email or print out and give to clinicians you may be working with if you may be interested in that. You can email us at qpp-surs@qualityinsights.org, we'll be happy to send that to you. In addition to the one-page flier, it also includes suggested social media content and newsletter articles that you can copy and paste and include in your existing publication. We found that when providers see information from trusted sources, from partners like you, it carries a lot more weight. If you're able to help share this information we would greatly appreciate it.

As we move forward, we're currently exploring the formation of a QPP partners in healthy quality stakeholder collaboration network. This network would be an inclusive group of people, just like you listening to this webinar today, who have a vested interest in clinicians succeeding in the Quality Payment Program that will help support this transition. We want to collaborate and help make connections between stakeholders. This is not an ask of us, this is a collaboration so that we can all work together, share resources, and share information.

We also know that each of you have very, very strong relationships with your constituencies and the clinicians you work with. This allows all of us to actively communicate QPP goals, resources, and initiatives. And most of all, it's important to have a resource for feedback, to know what the challenges are, what resources are needed. You perform GAP analyses to know what it is that clinicians may be struggling with certain aspects of the transition to QPP. By working together, we can keep our ear on the ground and make the offerings of all of our initiatives most effective.

If and when we form the PIQ what we're doing is kind of a recruitment stage now, seeing if folks would be interested in that. When the time comes, we would propose having periodic teleconferences between all of the stakeholders, so that we can collaborate and share our initiatives with one another. As I've mentioned before, we have some ready-to-go articles for your e-newsletters, for your website, for your social media. We'd be happy to continue to provide those short, nice condensed, ready-to-go stuff that you can copy and paste and it really has a lot of meaning to the clinicians that you work with.

We here at Quality Insights would also be happy to help present on your webinars and during your teleconferences by having our experts present on aspects of the Quality Payment Program, which you think people may have interest in. That's our pleasure to help get the word out. We also want to link to your initiatives and resources on our website as well to help get the word out and broaden our base of connections between everyone, and we're looking at potential co-branding opportunities that show our appreciation for your participation such as an exclusive QPP-IQ member logo that you can display on your website or in your e-publications that demonstrate your commitment to helping providers in the transition to the Quality Payment Program and certainly we want to increase your visibility as well by displaying your logo on the QPP service center's website.

Most of all we want to work together. We want to support your goals and initiatives. We also want to hear your thoughts on the value, benefits, and composition of a QPP-PIQ group. Our primary stakeholder liaison for this project is Crystal Welch who you heard from at the very beginning of today's presentation. She can be reached at cwelch@qualityinsights.org or 1-800-642-8686 extension 4277. We know that together we can and will help every practice improve their care and successfully participate in the Quality Payment Program.

At this time we're going to transition to the question and answer session of today's webinar. Please type your questions in the "chat" or "Q&A" box in your web-x player on the right. As Crystal mentioned at the beginning of today's session you may need to click on the "chat" button at the top to bring up that window so we can address as many questions as we can. Let's go out to the "chat" window and see what we have in here thus far. Okay. Our first question here, this one would be for Amy. This question asks, "Amy, are nurse practitioners eligible for QPP support?"

Amy Weiser: Thanks Shanen. Yes, actually, they along with physicians and podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists, and certified registered nurse anesthetists. We are definitely able to help nurse practitioners.

Shanen Wright: Excellent. Thank you Amy. Let's see, next question coming in here, this one's about stakeholders, I think this one will be for Crystal. This questions asks about a free QPP awareness initiative that this organization's undertaking for the clinicians they work with. They're wanting to know if this is something that we at Quality Insights would be able to help promote among the clinicians that have signed up for QPP assistance.

Crystal Welch: Well absolutely and that's exactly the kind of partnerships that we're really wanting to cultivate. I think the last slide flashed up some information for me, but I'll go ahead and read off my email again so feel free to contact me at cwelch, C-W-E-L-C-H@qualityinsights.org. Then we always have our 1-800 number as well and it's 1-800-642-8686, that's extension 4277. That's like you mentioned with the question, but that's exactly what we're looking for.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Crystal. All right, this next question's going to be for Kathy. This stakeholder says, "I'm hearing a lot of confusion from the clinicians I work with about QPP timeline, would you mind to clarify when it is that scoring equates to payment adjustments?"

Kathy Wild: Sure. The performance year and the payment year are always two years apart. The reason for that is CMS needs one year to review that data before they can implement those payment adjustments. For 2017, everything that is being performed this year will affect all the payments in 2019.

Shanen Wright: Okay. We have a follow-up question related, so we'll stay with you Kathy. This participants want to know, what is the data submission deadline?

Kathy Wild: Okay. So for 2017 reporting, CMS is allowing a period of 90 days, pretty much the first quarter of 2018 and they have set the deadline as March 31, 2018 to submit all of that data.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Kathy. Let's see what we have next here in the cue. I think this one would be best for Amy. This question asks, "I was talking with a clinician who had questions about specific information needed to register for the QPP support center website. Where should I direct him so he can get help before he starts signing up?"

Amy Weiser: Okay. Thank you Shanen. For practices that need help just signing up, they should go ahead and email us at qpp-surs@qualityinsights.org or they can call our 800 number at 1-877-497-5065.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Amy and thank you Laurie Fink our Executive Producer today has also shared these numbers and email addresses on the chat window as well, so you can refer to those in your web-x player. Keep in mind you can continue to use the Q&A feature or chat me privately to make sure I see all of your questions here in the web-x chat window. We have another one coming in now. This one's about stakeholders, so Crystal. This person says, "We'd love to get the word out about QPP, we work with a lot of small practices, what's the best way for us to get started sharing this information?"

Crystal Welch: Well, and I'm glad that Laurie put my contact information up on the chat room because that's probably a good way to contact me just to ... I'll be happy to provide a printable e-flier and email that out, just to contact any of us, but since my information's right up there, that would be perfect. But we do have this printable e-flier and it also includes just suggested text for social media content, and newsletter articles just for folks to get started with. There's nothing better than having that turnkey text where you can just plop it into things as far as information. So to get the word out, we need help, so that would be wonderful and just contact us and we'll be happy to get that printable e-flier out to you.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Crystal. Let's go to our next question now. I think this one would be best for Kathy. This person asks, "Where do eligible clinicians go to submit MIPS data?"

Kathy Wild: Okay. There's several submission methods to submit MIPS data. Clinicians have the option for each different category to submit it the method that they prefer. The choices are using their EHR vendor, they can use a CMS approved quality registry, they can also use a CMS approved clinical quality data registry, which is a QCDR, they could also just do attestation, which is the manual process of entering the numerators and denominators and the selection of the improvement activity. So there's several different methods. Depending on which method they do will reflect how are they going to submit it. But they can find out about all these different reporting submission methods on the QPP website, on the education and tools page, there's several resources there.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Kathy. We go to our next question. Let's see if Amy can get this one for us. "You mentioned a MIPS calculator in today's presentation. That sounds like something the practices I work with would benefit from. Can you tell me a little bit more about it so I can share this information?"

Amy Weiser: Sure. Absolutely. The MIPS calculator is kind of like a sandbox for practices to play in. Again it shows the MIPS score and the other thing I wanted to say is that just because you score a certain way in the MIPS calculator isn't exactly how you may score when Medicare scores you for MIPS, but it does give you a pretty good idea of where you are and how you're doing. So that's basically what it is. It's a way to show your quality improvement over time. You can use it as a tool for that.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Amy. Another stakeholder question here for Crystal. This person writes, "We have an upcoming webinar scheduled about QPP with our practices, would someone from Quality Insights be available to share information about what you have to offer and be our guest presenter?"

Crystal Welch: Absolutely. Definitely. We have some of those already scheduled and some with associations and societies, that's exactly what we would like to do and maybe help ease the burden for presentation as well. Get me the details, we'll make sure you have a presenter from Quality Insights, from whatever state, that might be virtually, over the phone, on more of a teleconference type thing, or if it's within a very close distance maybe in person. But just give me the details and contact me and I'd be happy to set something up, that sounds great.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Crystal. Here's another QPP question, this one's probably best for Kathy. This person asks, "What types of clinicians are considered physicians in QPP?"

Kathy Wild: Okay thanks Shanen. So we usually think of a physician as a MD or DO, medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy. But in the final rule in part of the Medicare definition is actually banded for the word "physician". So it also includes a doctor of dental surgery, so that would be your DDS, it includes doctors of dental medicine, which is a DMD, a doctor of podiatric medicine, which is a DPM, doctors of optometry, which is an optometrist, so they'd be an OD, and also chiropractors are included.

Shanen Wright: Okay thank you Kathy. The next question asks about small practices, so we're going to lob this one your way Amy. This question asks, it says, "A lot of the small practices I work with are asking me if they need an EHR to participate in MIPS, is this the case?"

Amy Weiser: So actually you don't have to have an EHR to participate in MIPS. MIPS includes the advancing care information category, which was formally known as "meaningful use" and it does require the use of certified EHR technology. However, since MIPS scores are weighted, some of all categories, not completing one of the categories will not result in a total failure for the program. For the first year of 2017, the ACI, Advancing Care Information, is weighted at 25% of the overall score. If you don't have an EHR and you don't complete the ACI, your score will be no higher than a total of 75 points. But you still have the opportunity to achieve additional points through the remaining categories. Most importantly, for the first year, just reporting one quality measure on one patient without having to meet the patient thresholds or measure benchmarks or reporting one improvement activity will ensure that you avoid a penalty entirely.

The quality measure may be reported by claims or registry, thereby eliminating the need for the use of an EHR for the first year. The improvement activity will be through attestation and there's other options also actually through improvement activities. But the other thing I wanted to point out is that if you

have practices that are in a position where they want to implement an EHR, we are definitely able to help them with that. So even if they haven't started, that is something that we can help them with with QPP-SURS.

Shanen Wright: Thank you Amy. We have one more question in the cue before we wrap up today and this one's for Crystal. This comment and question says, "Before initiating a partnership with you all, I just want to make sure that this assistance is truly free for the duration of the initiative. This isn't a free trial or anything like that is it?"

Crystal Welch: Well that's ... I'm glad that question came up because there are a lot of things out there and sometimes people think that this is, we have something and then you lure you in and we'll try to sell you something, but no. We are publicly funded through CMS, so everything is absolutely free. As a matter of fact, the printable e-flier that I mentioned earlier in a lot of our literature you'll see "free" written all over the front of it in bolder type, just simply because we want to make sure that people know that. So just having that free service allows us to facilitate that neutral forum for information exchange just between the QPP-SURS staff, the partners, and clinicians. So we just absolutely have nothing to sell and we won't charge practices after a certain timeframe or ... during the whole duration like the question that was submitted, it is free and for any of the assistance that we offer. There's just no strings attached. For that person, if they want to just talk more about having a partnership opportunity, whether it be a stakeholder or with a practice, we just want to find that win-win for all of us, but yes, absolutely, 100% absolutely free. Now with a caveat. The assistance that we're giving, it is virtual for the most part. So a lot of the assistance is going to be with our specialists and there might be under certain circumstances something more than virtual, but for the most part, I just kind of wanted to throw that out as well Shanen.

Shanen Wright: Okay. Thank you, Crystal. If you have any additional questions, you can reach out to us 24 hours a day at qpp-support@qualityinsights.org or call us at 1-877-497-5065. You can also see on the screen our web address qppsupport.org and most of all, by working together we can get every small practice and large practice in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia on the pathway to QPP success.

Please note for all of you attending, we will be emailing you a link to today's slides and a recording of today's webinar soon. And we ask that you please take a moment or two to fill out the evaluation at the end of the webinar. One behalf of Kathy Wild, Amy Weiser, Crystal Welch, Laurie Fink and myself Shanen Wright, I'd like to thank you for joining us for today's webinar presentation. Have a great day.