

Request for Information: Defining QIO Service Areas

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. The notice is on the FedBizOpps website at <http://go.usa.gov/Ty8d>.

About What Was CMS Seeking Comment?

CMS sought public comment 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 also sought 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 Did CMS Seek 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 Did CMS Accept Comments?

All comments were welcomed through Friday, May 31, 2013. CMS encourages you to read the RFI in its entirety, including its [Appendix](#). Get the full text at <http://go.usa.gov/Ty8d>.

Special Open Door Forum: Listening Session for Future Development of the QIO Program

On Wednesday, January 24, 2013, from 12:30 - 2:00 pm ET, CMS hosted a listening session on the future development of the QIO Program. An invitation to the session is provided in the "Downloads" section, below, along with the PowerPoint slides for the session.