

AQAF- Your Partner In Improving Health Care Quality

By: Michael Jones, APR, AQAF Director of Communications

AQAF (Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation) is Alabama's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO). A private non-profit organization, AQAF contracts with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide direct technical assistance to Alabama physicians, hospitals and nursing homes to improve the value of health care services that are paid for by Medicare. AQAF does this by helping health care providers align care processes with national standards that are clearly linked to better patient outcomes. Because our work focuses on many common diagnoses and procedures, and on health care providers who are in greatest need of improvement, it benefits all patients regardless of insurance status.

AQAF staff offer health care providers a wide range of expertise that helps them build the internal capacity to sustain and expand quality improvement initiatives. This expertise encompasses quality improvement techniques like root cause and failure mode effects analysis, as well as intra-team communication, clinical data collection, intervention design, survey administration and statistical analysis.

AQAF's work builds on a growing base of scientific evidence about the most effective strategies for improving health care quality and efficiency. AQAF is expected to achieve results, and is held accountable by CMS for the performance of the health care providers that we assist. In our current three-year program (the 9th Scope of Work) with CMS, AQAF is focusing on the following priorities:

- **Beneficiary Protection.** Protecting the rights of Alabama's more than 800,000 Medicare beneficiaries who are concerned about the quality of their health care.
- **Patient Safety.** Improving the safety of care in Alabama's nursing homes and hospitals by decreasing rates of pressure ulcers, physical restraints and MRSA and by improving inpatient surgical safety and hospital care for heart failure.
- **Prevention.** Increasing rates of screening mammography, colorectal screening and flu and pneumonia vaccination by helping primary care physicians make effective use of electronic health records.
- **Care Transitions.** Improving patient transitions from the hospital to home, skilled nursing care or home health care with the goal of reducing unnecessary hospital readmissions.

AQAF is a physician-sponsored organization, and physician involvement is essential to our success as the state's QIO. We invite all Alabama physicians to become members. Becoming a member puts you under no obligation and **membership is free.**

Benefits of membership include:

- Recognition for being a leader committed to health care quality in Alabama and the ability to foster positive change
- The privilege of being nominated and/or to make nominations for the AQAF board of directors

To join AQAF as a physician member complete the membership form on pg.5 and fax it to 205-970-1616, or mail to AQAF, 2 Perimeter Park S., Suite. 200 W, Birmingham, AL 35243, ATTN: Jo Heaton.

ALABAMA REGIONAL EXTENSION CENTER (ALREC)

Moving Alabama Providers from Paper to Electronic Health Records

"This is an exciting opportunity for the providers in Alabama. We understand that transitioning from paper to electronic records can be a daunting and expensive task. Our job is to help make this a smoother and faster transition resulting in the potential for more efficient patient care. This will ultimately translate to a better workflow for the providers and better quality of care for the patients."

Dan Roach, MD
Project Director, ALREC;
Assistant Dean, COM Medical Informatics Education
Director Medical Informatics, USA CSHI

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb. 1 JCMS Alliance Meeting at Rouso Facial Plastic Surgery Clinic at 10:30 a.m. The subject will be "Non-Invasive Cosmetic Techniques". For reservations or information contact Cindy Yielding at 879-3334
- Feb. 15 The Wayne Finley 811 Breakfast Club Meeting – Dr. Doug Tilt will speak on "Concierge Medicine" at 8:30 a.m. in the JCMS Board Room
- Feb. 28 Executive Committee Meeting – 5:30 p.m.
- March 15 The Wayne Finley 811 Breakfast Club Meeting – Firmon Hardenbergh, M.D., will speak on "Tom Douglas Spies, M.D.: The Man, the Myth, the Miracle" at 8:30 a.m. in the JCMS Board Room
- March 21 Foundation Trust Meeting – 5:00 p.m.
Executive Committee Meeting – 6:00 p.m.
Board of Directors Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
- March 26 Doctors' Day Dinner - Call Anne Lamkin for reservations or information at 871-3479
- Apr. 18 Executive Committee Meeting – 5:30 p.m.
- Apr. 19 The Wayne Finley 811 Breakfast Club Meeting – Henry Laws, M.D., will speak at 8:30 a.m. in the JCMS Board Room

Contact Juanita Pruitt at 933-8601 or jpruitt@jcmsalabama.org for more information regarding any of the above events.

MGMA Birmingham Chapter

In today's dynamic healthcare environment, managing a productive medical practice is a complex task. A medical practice manager is unique in that a manager's duties often involve many areas of responsibilities such as accounting, personnel, billing & collections, facility management, purchasing, and acting as the physician liaison, marketing director, and resident managed care expert. Who can help you successfully face these challenges...

MGMA Birmingham was founded in 1976 and is the state's largest and oldest local chapter affiliate. MGMA Birmingham's members are primarily administrators and managers of medical practices, clinics, large and small group practices and freestanding hospital-affiliated and university-affiliated medical groups. Luncheon meetings are held nine months out of the year, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at Rosewood Hall, Homewood AL.

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Alabama Allergy & Asthma

Debbie West, Member at Large
Birmingham Pediatric Associates

Chapter contact and information:

Connie McDonald, Chapter Historian
CardioVascular Associates
cdmcdonald@bellsouth.net

In Memoriam

The JCMS wants to acknowledge the recent passing of the following JCMS member:

Lamar M.C. Smith, M.D.
November 26, 2010

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The University of South Alabama Center for Strategic Health Innovation (USA CSHI), representing a statewide consortium of partners and stakeholders, was recently awarded a cooperative agreement to serve as the Alabama Regional Extension Center, or ALREC. Partners and stakeholders include The University of South Alabama, Alabama Medicaid Agency, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Auburn University, Alabama Hospital Association, Alabama Primary Healthcare Association, Alabama Academy of Family Physicians, Alabama Academy of Pediatrics, the JHD Group and Management and Medical Consulting Services, Inc. ALREC will serve as an advocate for Alabama physicians and deliver services to assist providers in moving from paper to electronic health records and in achieving Meaningful Use status.

Membership in ALREC is open to all providers in Alabama and provides access to services such as group purchasing discounts, EHR adoption assistance, assistance with education and training, workflow analysis and project management, interfaces to HIEs and more. ALREC will provide education and vendor neutral direct technical assistance to ensure that providers in Alabama will be eligible for Medicare and Medicaid incentive reimbursements. Whether you already have an electronic health record in place or not, the comprehensive technical expertise avail-

able within ALREC will ensure your practice successfully implements EHR, meets Meaningful Use requirements, and receive incentives potentially up to \$67,300 per provider.

Federal funding under the cooperative agreement is targeted to "Priority Primary Care Providers" (PPCPs), or providers in practices of 10 or less who specialize in primary care, family practice, obstetrics, gynecology, geriatrics, or internal medicine. However, all providers who join ALREC will receive adoption and implementation services at significantly reduced rates. Funding is provided by The ARRA Act of 2009, HIT-09-003 (CFDA #93.718)

To encourage enrollment of PPCPs, ALREC has agreed to waive membership fees for the first 1,000 PPCPs through April, 2011. This is a unique opportunity for primary care providers in Alabama, so act now to ensure you are able to take advantage of the services offered by ALREC.

For more information, please contact ALREC:

Alabama Regional Extension Center (ALREC)
307 University Blvd./TRP III, Suite 1100
Mobile, Alabama 36688
Phone: (251) 414-8170
Fax: (251) 414-8171
Website: www.al-rec.org
Email: info@al-rec.org

2011 Doctors' Day

The Jefferson County Medical Society Alliance cordially invites all JCMS members to attend this year's Doctors' Day Dinner. The four-course dinner will be held on Saturday, March 26 at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Dasher. The cost is \$50 per person. For more information or to place your reservation, please contact Anne Lamkin at 871-3479. Checks should be made payable to JCMSA and forwarded to Anne Lamkin at 3325 Overbrook Road, Birmingham, AL 35213.

New Members

Robert Agee, Jr., M.D.	Family Practice
Karen Albright, D.O.	Neurology
Scott Allen Anderson, M.D.	Pediatric Surgery
A. Philip Badewa, M.D., PhD	Family Medicine
Elizabeth C. Benton, M.D.	Pediatrics
Ronald Alvin Braswell, M.D.	Ophthalmology
William Burkhalter, III, M.D.	Family/Sports Medicine
Omer Lee Burnett, III, M.D.	Radiation Oncology
Manuel F. Carcelen, M.D.	Pulmonary Medicine
Waldemar Francisco Carlos, M.D.	Pediatrics
Ryan Thomas Cordry, D.O.	Orthopaedic Surgery
Jared Cox, M.D.	Urology
David Rich Ellington, M.D.	Resident
Daniel Harmon, M.D.	Neurological Surgery
Elizabeth May Horton, M.D.	Resident
Benjamin Scott Jones, M.D.	Resident
SangAe Kim-Park, M.D.	Family Medicine
Jason Markland, D. O.	Emergency Medicine
Jeffrey Martin, D.O.	Dermatology
Hugh McElderry, Jr. M.D.	Internal Medicine
Kathy Wingo Monroe, M.D.	Pediatrics
Elizabeth Lewis Phillips, M.D.	Emergency Medicine
Barry Rayburn, M.D.	Cardiovascular Disease
Jonathon Sadler, M.D.	Anesthesiology
Jennifer Elizabeth Sohn, M.D.	Resident
Ross VanderNoot, M.D.	Emergency Medicine
Lawrence W. Ver Hoef, M.D.	Neurology
Erin Wakefield, D.O.	Resident

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[Careers@OctapharmaPlasma.com/](mailto:Careers@OctapharmaPlasma.com)
Please include "Contract Physician" in the subject line.

ERRATA

In the last issue of Pulse we listed Dr. Robert Chad Deal's specialty as being Plastic Surgery.

*Dr. Deal's correct specialty is Cosmetic Surgery.
We apologize for this error.*

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AQAF Membership Application

AQAF Bylaws, Article III. Section I. "Membership" in the corporation shall be limited to physicians who are doctors of medicine or osteopathic medicine. In order to be eligible for membership, said physicians shall: A. Be licensed to practice medicine or osteopathic medicine in the State of Alabama and be engaged in active practice as defined by Section 4620.B., of the QIO Manual, and subsequent revisions thereto; B. Practice (on a routine basis) a minimum of 20 hours per week. The "routine basis" requirement is met if a physician provides care and treatment to Medicare beneficiaries on an ongoing basis throughout the year; and ; C. Have active staff privileges in a health care facility, on a regular basis, as defined by 42 CFR 476.1."

FAX to: 205-970-1616

or

Mail to: 2 Perimeter Park S., Suite 200 W
Birmingham 35243

By completing this application, I certify that I am eligible to be a member of AQAF:

Name: (Please print) _____

Address: _____

Telephone (Office) _____ email: _____

NPI# _____

County where practice/live: _____

AL Lic. # _____

Specialty: _____

Primary hospital/facility: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

In The NEWS



Mark A. Elkus, M.D. an orthopedic surgeon with The Orthopedic Group of Birmingham, P.C., has recently been accepted into the prestigious American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons. Dr. Elkus received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee School of Medicine, completed

his residency at Campbell Clinic and a fellowship at Lenox Hill Hospital in Adult Reconstructive Surgery. Dr. Elkus is certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.



The University of Alabama System Board of Trustees recently appointed **F. Cleveland Kinney, PhD, MD**, Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology at the UAB School of Medicine. Dr. Kinney served as director of the Division of Geriatric Psychi-

atry for over a decade and is completing five years of service on the Jefferson County Board of Health and the Jefferson County Medical Society.



Ray L. Watts, M.D., was named Senior Vice President for Medicine of the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Dean of the School of Medicine at UAB after a nationwide search. His appointment began on September 20, 2010. Dr. Watts earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from UAB in 1976,

and was valedictorian of Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis in 1980. He completed internship, residency and fellowship training at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital. Before joining UAB, he served a two-year fellowship at the National Institutes of Health and was a member of Emory University faculty. Prior to this, Dr. Watts held the John N. Whitaker Endowed Chair in Neurology and chaired the Department of Neurology. He is an internationally renowned leader in Parkinson's disease research and care.

Ask Robin Long for your MEMBER DISCOUNT !!

The Jefferson County Medical Society has arranged for its members to receive special discounts for collection and billing services. By special agreement with Healthcare Financial Services, LLC (HFS), members will get outstanding collections results and services while paying low contingency fee rates...no results, no fees for JCMS members. Take advantage of your JCMS affiliation and call Robin Long at 601-420-1242 or 1-877-747-7072 (Client Services). Your benefits will be worth the call as HFS designs a special campaign for your specific needs. Be sure to mention your membership with JCMS to receive the discounted rate.

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JCMS Annual Dinner Meeting





901 South 18th Street
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