**The Qualified Clinical Data Registry – What it means for Anesthesiology**

The National Anesthesia Clinical Outcomes Registry (NACOR), developed and maintained by the Anesthesia Quality Institute of the ASA, was recently designated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a Qualified Clinical Data Registry (QCDR). We are among the first 40 registries to be so designated.

The function and certification of QCDRs was established by the most recent CMS Final Rule (late 2013); QCDRs also figure prominently in drafts of SGR reform legislation. QCDRs are the answer from CMS to the proliferation of requirements for physician performance reporting under the Physician Quality Reporting System, Meaningful Use, and Value-Based Purchasing. The goal of the QCDR program is to move responsibility for collecting data on physician performance from CMS itself to certified professional society registries. The registry will be responsible for establishing performance measures, collecting data from providers, scoring performance, and reporting the final results to CMS.

To be certified, a QCDR must have experience in collecting performance data from multiple physicians in multiple different locations and practices, must already be providing participants with risk-adjusted benchmarking information for quality management, and must have appropriate safeguards in place for secure handling of protected healthcare information. NACOR met all of these requirements as a CMS-certified registry for reporting PQRS measures. Providers must document at least 9 measures (with at least one outcome) from at least 3 performance domains in order to qualify for future incentive payments, and at least 3 measures to avoid short-term penalties.

The most important aspect of QCDR certification is that AQI was encouraged to nominate specialty-specific measures for performance reporting. Our approved measures for 2014 include our specialty’s previously approved 4 PQRS measures, 4 new PQRS measures, and 11 new measures not previously part of any public reporting system. Complete details on these measures may be found on the AQI website at: <http://www.aqihq.org/PQRSReporting.aspx>

These measures have been developed through the work of the ASA Committee on Performance and Outcome Measures and the ASA Department of Quality and Regulatory Affairs. AQI will be developing methodology for collecting performance data on these measures from diverse practice environments, and will be learning from the process as we implement it. From both our perspective and that of CMS, 2014 is a pilot year for this program. We will have the opportunity to add new measures, subtract non-functional ones and otherwise modify this effort in 2015.

Practices wishing to report practitioner performance through the QCDR mechanism for 2014 must self-nominate by July 1 and must be participating in NACOR. AQI anticipates no additional charge for this service for ASA members in 2014, but reserves the right to charge additional fees for non-members wishing to report through this mechanism.