



## **Quality Awards Criteria and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

In 2015, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) significantly changed the structure of the quality awards methodology for the Medi-Cal Managed Care program to recognize a broader array of achievements and to highlight quality improvement efforts among its Medi-Cal managed care health plans (MCPs). The following quality award categories have been adopted, and are intended to highlight MCPs that have excelled in improving health care quality for the over ten million managed care beneficiaries receiving services.

### **Goals**

- To promote excellence in the provision of health care services by recognizing MCPs for outstanding achievements in the improvement of health care quality and population health.
- To broaden the criteria used for evaluation to reflect changes due to expansion of managed care into all 58 counties of California, and the addition of new populations to the Medi-Cal Managed Care program.
- To encourage the sharing of best practices among MCPs by highlighting achievements in quality improvement.
- To encourage innovative interventions that advance health quality, and recognize efforts that advance health equity.

### **Minimum Award Eligibility Criteria**

- 1) MCP must have submitted HEDIS data on time for auditing purposes during the specified reporting period.
- 2) MCP must have three or fewer measures below the MPL to be eligible for the Outstanding Performance Award.
- 3) MCP must have no entries of Not Reported (NR) on any External Accountability Set (EAS) measure.
- 4) MCPs that have been found to be in violation of federal or State laws, regulations, or other requirements set forth in guidance such as All Plan Letters, or are under a DHCS Quality Corrective Action Plan (CAP) during the measurement year and have not met the established milestones, may not be eligible. MCPs under a newly issued Quality CAP may not be eligible.
- 5) New reporting units in their first year of operation are not eligible for the Outstanding Performance Award, as the first year of reporting is considered a baseline year. New reporting units will be eligible for the Most Improved Awards in their third year



of operation.

## Quality Awards Categories

### 1) Outstanding Performance Award

*(3 awards based on enrollment clusters)*

- Award the MCP with the best overall HEDIS performance in each cluster. DHCS grouped MCPs into three clusters (small, medium and large) by enrollment size as reported for the end of the previous calendar year. Clusters were determined using Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software.
  - DHCS applied a point system identical to the Aggregated Quality Factor Score as the basis for determining the MCPs with the highest scores based on HEDIS performance.
  - Points for each indicator are computed from the EAS indicators for which DHCS holds MCPs to the Minimum Performance Levels (MPLs) to calculate an overall score for each MCP reporting unit.
  - Scores at the MCP reporting unit are aggregated to calculate the total score for the MCP.
  - Scores at the MCP are grouped in its respective clusters.

### 2) Most Improved Awards

*(4 awards)*

#### ➤ **Greatest Improvement in Quality Strategy Focus Areas – Winner and Runner Up**

Award the MCP Reporting Units with the most significant improvement from the prior year based on performance in four Quality Strategy Focus Areas:

1. Comprehensive Diabetes Care (an average of 6 indicators)
  2. Controlling High Blood Pressure
  3. Childhood Immunizations Status – Combination 3
  4. Prenatal and Postpartum Care – Postpartum Care
- DHCS applied a point system similar to the Aggregated Quality Factor Score as the basis for determining the MCPs with the highest scores based on HEDIS performance.
  - Points for each QSFA indicator are computed to calculate an overall score for each MCP reporting unit.



- QSFA score at the MCP reporting unit is compared to previous calendar year's score to determine MCP with the greatest improvement in one year.

➤ **Greatest Overall Improvement in One Year – Winner and Runner Up**

Award the MCP Reporting Units with the most significant improvement from the prior year based on performance across all EAS Indicators for which DHCS holds MCPs to the MPLs.

- DHCS applied a point system similar to the Aggregated Quality Factor Score as the basis for determining the MCPs with the highest scores based on HEDIS performance.
- Points for each indicator are computed from the EAS indicators for which DHCS holds MCPs to the Minimum Performance Levels (MPLs) to calculate an overall score for each MCP reporting unit.
- Score at the MCP reporting unit is compared to previous calendar year's score to determine MCP with the greatest improvement in one year.

**3) Innovation Award**

*(2 awards)*

➤ **Innovation Award – Winner and Runner Up**

Innovation Awards are aimed at highlighting innovative interventions by the MCPs intended to improve the quality of health care for Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

- MCPs submit brief descriptions of the intervention(s) to DHCS.
- DHCS releases all submissions to the MCPs for a vote; one vote per MCP.
- DHCS staff vote to resolve any ties between submissions.
- A winner and runner up are selected based on total MCP and DHCS votes.