Vision

As system reform accelerates and payers focus on value over volume, quality measurement and improvement will become even more critical in spreading evidence-based medicine. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is a critical agency in the age of value-based care. Its mission to produce useable evidence to make health care safer, better, and more accessible, equitable, and affordable will be essential to ensuring that all Americans get the information, services, and care they need. AHRQ houses the Pediatric Quality Measurement Program (PQMP), which helps coordinate the development and spread of evidence-based consensus pediatric measures. As the new Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) takes hold in Medicare, AHRQ must use its resources to focus on Medicaid and CHIP to help ensure that every child gets the right care in the right place at the right time.

Recommended Administrative Actions

Prioritize pediatrics. AHRQ should advocate for children and pediatrics to be a focus in the system reform efforts of the CMS Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) and other groups. AHRQ must take a leadership role in pediatric quality measure development. Efforts to date have unfortunately contributed to multiplying, confusing, and duplicative measure development.

Recommended Congressional Actions

Ensure children have access to high-quality care. The Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act’s (CHIPRA) Title IV included an unprecedented commitment to pediatric quality improvement. The law included $225 million over five years to fund pediatric measure development, state demonstrations, an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on pediatric quality measures, and a pediatric electronic health record format. Pediatric quality measures should be included as part of the next Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) extension and should focus on a continued role for the federal government as a catalyst for pediatric health system change.

Funding Priorities

Safeguard focused and predictable resources for quality improvement. As system reform becomes even more critical, Congress should increase funding for AHRQ, since its overall budget has been cut to $300 million.

Fund for the PQMP and Centers of Excellence. AHRQ has served as the home for the PQMP since CHIPRA’s passage in 2009. Funding for the PQMP and its associated programs (such as the Centers of Excellence) should be extended and strengthened to focus on measure development, stewardship, spread, and technical assistance.

About this Document

This document is an excerpt from Blueprint for Children: How the Next President Can Build a Foundation for a Healthy Future (http://aap.org/blueprint), which was produced by the American Academy of Pediatrics in September 2016 and has also been endorsed by the following organizations: the Academic Pediatric Association, the American Pediatric Society, America’s Promise Alliance, the Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs, Family Voices, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, the Pediatric Policy Council, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, the Society for Pediatric Research and ZERO TO THREE.