



Arizona Priority Care™

One Goal. One Priority. Your Healthcare.

2024 Behavioral Health Quality Program Description

AZPC Quality Improvement Committee Approved – February 2024

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Behavioral Health Network Structure

Arizona Priority Care (AZPC) will have the Quality Improvement (QI) infrastructure necessary to improve the quality and safety of clinical care and services we provide to our members.

AZPC utilizes the IPA structure to deliver healthcare to our members. The IPA model is an organized system of independent physicians or an association of such physicians. This model's physicians are generally paid on a modified fee-for-service or capitated basis.

Mission Statement

Our QI Department has a mission to provide an effective, system-wide, measurable plan for monitoring, evaluating, and improving the quality of care and services cost-effectively and efficiently to our members and practitioners.

Purpose/Program Description (Behavioral Health)

The AZPC Behavioral Health (BH) QI Program is designed to monitor and evaluate objectively and systematically the quality, appropriateness, and outcome of care/services delivered to members. In addition, the QI Program will provide mechanisms that continuously pursue opportunities for improvement and problem resolution.

Scope of Program

The scope of the QI Program is to monitor care, identify opportunities for improvement of care and services to both our members and practitioners, and ensure our services meet professionally recognized standards of practice. This is accomplished by assisting with identifying, investigating, implementing, and evaluating corrective actions that continuously improve and measure the quality of clinical and administrative service. The QI Program covers clinical and non-clinical care and services for our identified populations.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goals:

1. Ensuring ongoing communication and collaboration between the AZPC QI Department and the other areas of the organization, including, but not limited to, Customer Service, Care Management, and Behavioral Health providers and staff.
2. Ensuring members receive the highest quality of care and services by seeking and identifying improvement opportunities.
3. Ensuring behavioral health specialists are accessible and available to our members.
4. Monitoring and evaluating the standards of healthcare practice through evidence-based Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG) as the basis for clinical decision-making.
5. Participating in monitoring, improving, and measuring member and provider experience with all aspects of the local delivery system.
6. Utilizing a multi-disciplinary approach to assess, monitor, and improve our policies and procedures.
7. Promoting physician involvement in our QI Program and activities.
8. Collaborating with contracted hospital practitioners and health delivery organizations to ensure

- patient quality and care services' safety.
9. Fostering a supportive environment to help practitioners and providers improve the safety of their practices.
 10. Assessing and meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of our members.
 11. Meeting the changing standards of practice of the healthcare industry by adhering to all State and Federal laws and regulations.
 12. Monitoring our compliance with regulatory agency and health plan standards through annual oversight audits and survey activities
 13. Adopting, implementing, and supporting ongoing adherence to accreditation agency and health plan standards.
 14. Promoting the benefits of a coordinated care delivery system.
 15. Promoting preventive health services and care management of members with chronic conditions.
 16. Emphasizing a caring and therapeutic relationship between the patient and practitioner and a professional and collaborative relationship between the practitioner and the health plan.
 17. Ensuring there is a separation between clinical and financial decision-making.
 18. Seeking out and identifying opportunities to improve the quality of care and services provided to our members by our network providers.

Objectives:

1. Maintaining a credentialed network based on a thorough review and evaluation of each healthcare provider's education, training, experience, sanction activity, and performance.
2. Ensuring our members are afforded accessible healthcare by continually assessing member access to care and the availability of our network of practitioners and specialists.
 - a. AZPC is required to meet network adequacy standards established by Federal and State agencies and accreditation organizations such as the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA). Network adequacy standards are intended to ensure that provider networks offer consumers access to sufficient numbers and types of providers.
3. Assuring compliance with the requirements of the health plan and regulatory and accrediting agencies, including but not limited to CMS and NCQA, as demonstrated with any auditing activity.
4. Appropriately oversee and monitor BH QI activities of its contracted providers.
5. Ensuring that the QI structure, staff, and processes comply with all regulatory and health plan requirements by passing all audits and submitting required reports promptly.
6. Identify potential risk management issues and respond to all potential quality issues raised to the QI Department.
7. Actively work to maintain standards for quality of care and accessibility of care and service by ensuring that office telephone answer times and total office wait times are within the required standards and validated annually through a sampling of BH providers.
8. Assess our performance against Federal and State standards for Behavioral Health providers to ensure member access to highly coordinated and managed care.
9. Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to support and facilitate continuity of care within the AZPC network and to review the effectiveness of such mechanisms regularly and address issues as they arise.
10. Assure the highest levels of quality care for Medicare beneficiaries by maintaining STARS ratings of 4.0 or better in all measured areas.

Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest

All information related to the AZPC QI process is considered confidential. All QI data and information (including but not limited to minutes, reports, letters, correspondence, and reviews) are securely housed within the Clinical Services Department. All aspects of quality review are deemed confidential. All persons involved with review activities will adhere to the confidentiality guidelines applicable to the appropriate committee.

All QI activities, including correspondence, documentation, and files, are protected by State Confidentiality Statutes, the Federal Medical Information Act SB 889, and the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for patient confidentiality. All persons attending the QI Committee or any related sub-committee meetings will sign a Confidentiality Statement annually. All personnel are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon employment. By the nature of their position, only designated employees will have access to member health information as outlined in the policies and procedures.

No persons shall be involved in the review process of QI issues in which they were directly involved. If a potential conflict of interest is identified, another qualified reviewer will be designated. There is a separation of clinical/financial decision-making, and all committee members, including the committee chair, sign a Statement of this understanding.

AZPC ensures that all member care is:

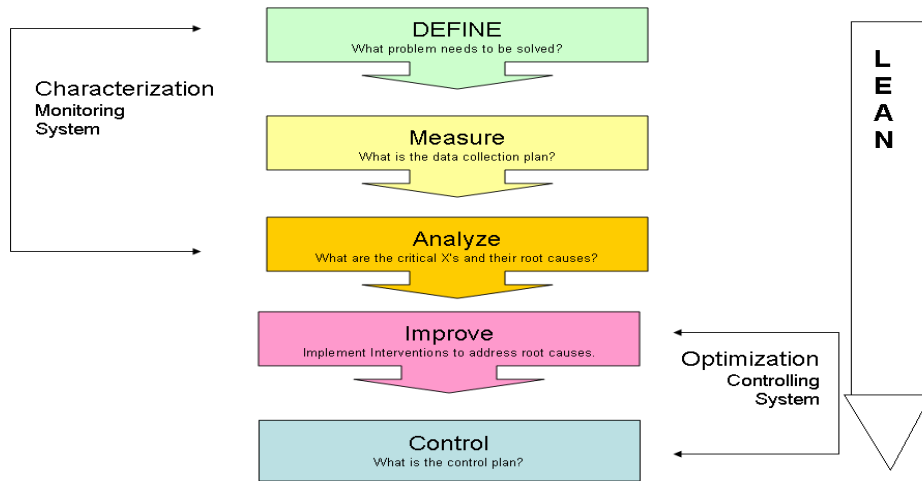
1. Consistent with professionally recognized standards of practice
2. Not withheld or delayed for any reason
3. Reviewed by appropriate clinical staff
4. Void of any influence or oversight by the finance department

Therefore, we do not penalize providers for discussing medically necessary or appropriate patient care regardless of the patient's benefits. We do not pressure providers to render care beyond the scope of their training or experience. We do not exert economic pressure on institutional providers to grant privileges to healthcare providers that would not otherwise be given.

QI Process

AZPC utilizes a QI process to identify opportunities to improve the quality of care and service for all members. AZPC adopts and maintains clinical guidelines, criteria, quality screens, audit tools, and other standard surveys for measuring quality of care, access, and service.

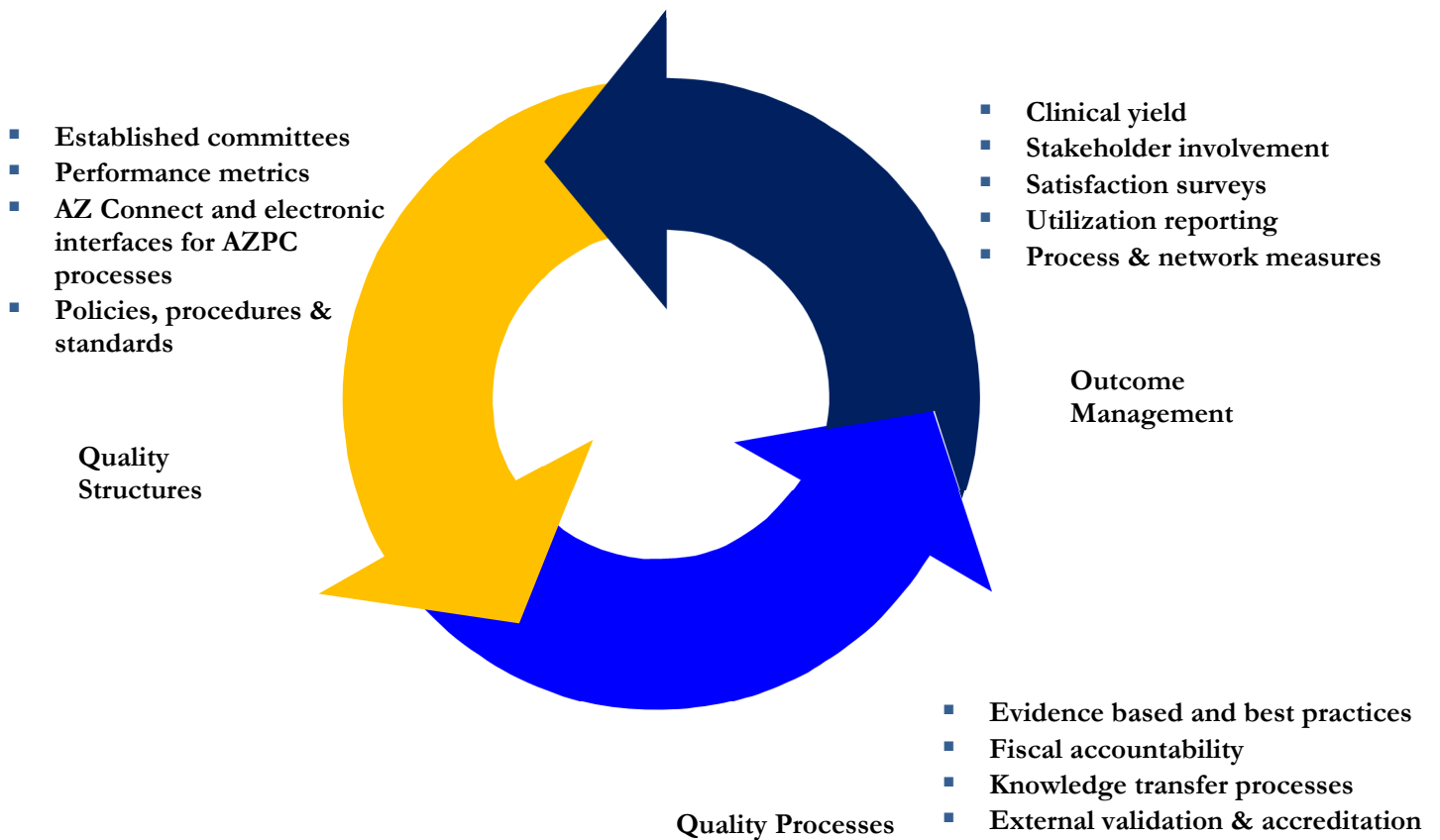
AZPC's Quality Program will accomplish its mission and promote its vision by implementing an outcomes-oriented, continuous quality improvement program. To support this approach, AZPC's Quality Program Description will be used as a dynamic document that is responsive to the voices of all stakeholders, flexible in its actions, and readily adaptable as conditions warrant. Employing systematic quality improvement processes such as Lean Six Sigma methodologies, the quality program obtains input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders and uses the Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control ('DMAIC') cycle process to ensure the timely identification of critical variables and their root causes (barriers.) DMAIC process outcomes are used to develop measurable interventions that lead to improvement. A graphical representation of AZPC's quality processes is presented below.



The use of LEAN and DMAIC quality processes propels continuous quality improvement at AZPC while supporting and enhancing the integration of quality and accountability into our Quality Program. All AZPC’s QI activities incorporate this approach to solving complex or multifaceted problems logically and systemically, leading to continuous quality improvement to ensure that activities conducted meet or exceed identified measures and goals. All aspects of operations, including member services, audits, provider performance, clinical processes, and outcomes, are appropriate areas for performance improvement. Through the use of DMAIC, stakeholders' expectations can be met.

The DMAIC quality process promotes continuous quality improvement at AZPC while supporting and enhancing the integration of quality and accountability within operations and in delivering quality services and care for consumers. This approach leads to the evolution of systems and the development of a culture of quality, as illustrated below.

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Program Structure

Governing Body

AZPC’s governing body is the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee grants AZPC’s QI Committee (QIC) authority. The QIC appoints a senior-level medical director to act as a facilitator for all QI activities, and they are the entities responsible for the oversight of the QI Program.

The Executive Committee directs the establishment of the QIC, which will evaluate and monitor the quality of patient care and address support services concerns. The Senior-level Medical Director, Medical Director(s), and Clinical Services Directors will report all QI activities to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee formally reviews and approves all QI activities quarterly, semi-annually, and annually and directs these operations continuously.

The Executive Committee will ensure sufficient staff and resources for the QI Program to achieve its objectives. These resources will include staff, data sources, and analytical resources such as statistical expertise and programs. AZPC ensures its contracted practitioners are deemed competent to meet regulatory and accreditation standards during our initial oversight survey and annual oversight audits after that.

Senior-level Medical Director

The Senior-level Medical Director is a physician with a current medical license. The Senior-level Medical Director is the Executive Committee’s designee responsible for implementing QI Program activities. The Senior-level Medical Director works with the Medical Director(s) and Clinical Services Directors to develop,

implement, and evaluate the QI Program. The Senior-level Medical Director is the Chairperson of the QI Committee.

Responsibilities include but not limited to:

1. Implementation, assessment, and improvement of the QI Plan. Substantial involvement in the evaluation and improvement of QI activities.
2. Ensuring that medical decisions are rendered by qualified medical and behavioral health personnel unhindered by fiscal or administrative management.
3. Ensuring that the medical and behavioral healthcare meets the community standards for acceptable care.
4. Ensuring that medical protocols and rules of conduct for practitioners are followed.
5. Developing and implementing medical policies.
6. Actively participating in the leveling and resolution of the grievances.
7. Providing support and clinical guidance to the program and all practitioners in the network.
8. Assuring compliance with the requirements of regulatory and accrediting agencies, including but not limited to CMS, NCQA, and the contracted health plans.
9. Ensuring that the QI and Utilization Management Departments interface appropriately to maximize opportunities for QI activities.
10. Directing the implementation of the QI process.
11. Overseeing the formulation, modification, and implementation of comprehensive policies and procedures that support the QI operations.
12. Analyzing QI data.
13. Review pertinent clinical grievances and quality of care concerns, assign severity levels, and direct corrective actions, including peer review, if required.
14. Directing health education and credentialing activities.
15. Review the QI Program, Work Plan, Annual Evaluation, and Quarterly or Semi-Annual Reports.
16. Assisting with developing, conducting, reviewing, and analysis of quality (HEDIS) studies.

Designated Physician

AZPC shall employ, contract, or designate a Medical Director with an unrestricted medical license.

Effective April 10, 2019, the State of Arizona recognizes equivalent occupational or professional licenses for all other States within the United States, under requirements listed in Arizona HB 2569 – A.R.S. 32-4302 Out-of-State applicants; residents' military spouses; licensure' certification; exceptions.

The Medical Director is fully credentialed and serves as the designated physician involved in all aspects of the BH QI Program development evaluation provides clinical oversight of all QI activities, supports the various committees, staff, and resources, and makes recommendations based on clinical care and administrative data. The Medical Director shall be available for assistance with member behavioral health QI procedures and processes, complaints, development of behavioral health guidelines, recommendations on service and safety, provide behavioral health QI statistical data, follow-up on identified issues, and attend the QIC Meeting at least once every 12 months.

The designated Behavioral Health Practitioner shall be involved in all behavioral aspects of the QI program and assist with member behavioral health complaints, development of behavioral health guidelines, development of programs, recommendations on service and safety, provide behavioral health QI statistical

data, and follow-up on identified issues. They must attend the QIC Meeting quarterly and as needed.

The designated physician will work with a qualified doctoral-level behavioral health practitioner (licensed physician or doctoral-level clinical psychologist), Senior Director of Care Coordination, VP of Clinical Services, Assoc. Director of UM Operations and Director of HEDIS and Quality Management Services to develop, implement, and evaluate the behavioral health aspects of the QI Program. The designated physician helps to plan, design, organize, monitor, communicate, and recommend modifications to the QI Program and all QI policies and procedures. The designated physician reports any areas of concern to the QI Committee.

Responsibilities include but not limited to:

1. Ensuring that BH decisions are reviewed by qualified behavioral health personnel unhindered by fiscal or administrative management.
2. Ensuring that behavioral healthcare meets the community standards for acceptable medical care.
3. Ensuring that behavioral health protocols are followed.
4. Actively participating in the functioning and resolution of the grievance procedures.
5. Providing support and clinical guidance to the program and all physicians in the network.
6. Assuring compliance with the requirements of regulatory agencies and accrediting, including but not limited to CMS, NCQA, and the contracted health plans.
7. Ensuring that the QI and UM Departments interface appropriately to maximize opportunities for QI activities.
8. Directing the implementation of the QI process for behavioral health.
9. Overseeing the formulation, modification, and implementation of comprehensive behavioral health policies and procedures that support the QI operations.
10. Analyzing behavioral health QI data.
11. Review pertinent behavioral health grievances and quality of care concerns, assign severity levels, and direct corrective actions, including peer review, if required.
12. Overseeing Credentialing activities.
13. Assisted with developing, conducting, reviewing, and analysis of HEDIS studies.

Director of HEDIS & Quality Management

The Director of HEDIS & Quality Management oversees the administrative day-to-day operations of the execution of QI activities and reports directly to the Sr. Medical Director. It is the Director of HEDIS & Quality Management's responsibility to interface with the staff and contracted providers on a day-to-day basis on QI processes and issues. Additional responsibilities include but not limited to:

1. Assist the senior-level medical director and all clinical services directors in developing and revising the QI program description, policies and procedures, annual evaluation, and work plan and presenting them for review and approval.
2. Collecting information for quarterly QI activity progress reports.
3. Ensuring quality trends and patterns are monitored and quality issues are identified.
4. Monitor and report to the senior-level medical director the resolution of QI activities by the QI Program.
5. Interfacing with all internal departments to ensure compliance with the QI Program and policies and procedures.
6. Liaising with network practitioners, ancillary providers, facilities, health plans, and regulatory agencies regarding QI issues.
7. Monitoring and follow up with all applicable QI activities.

8. Ensuring staff collects and monitors data and reports identified trends to the CMO and QIC.
9. Assuring compliance with the requirements of regulatory and accreditation agencies, including but not limited to CMS, NCQA, and contracted health plans.
10. Serving as a liaison with regulatory agencies for QI activities.
11. Ensuring appropriate resources and materials are available and ordered to meet the department's needs.
12. Overseeing the QI staff, ensuring compliance with company standards.
13. Maintaining a comprehensive grievance and appeals database to track pertinent case data that facilitates capturing, tracking, and trending quality data.
14. Overseeing member clinical grievance case files and the process for the Senior-level Medical Director and Medical Director designee.
15. Oversee the preparation of peer review case files for the senior-level medical director's action, as needed.
16. Collect, monitor, and report data for tracking and trending.
17. Performs statistical analysis relevant to QI functions and goals.
18. Serving as a liaison with departments for investigation, collaboration, and resolution of all identified quality of care issues.
19. Overseeing the preparation of grievance, compliance, and quality reports for management, Executive Committee, and QIC meetings.
20. Track compliance with reporting requirements and provide reports for the QIC meetings.
21. Monitoring network QI activities to ensure proper performance of QI functions in compliance with regulatory and health plan delegation requirements.
22. Oversee and participate with regulatory audit(s) preparation and coordination.
23. Review Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)/Corrective Action Plans (CAP) for appropriateness, as needed.
24. Provides guidance and assistance to department heads, organization staff, and contractors in selecting and applying continuous QI tools and data collection methodologies to achieve compliance.
25. Assist all clinical service directors in monitoring and following up with all applicable QI activities.
26. Engages department heads and organization staff to assess compliance and identify improvement opportunities.
27. Ensuring member and provider experience surveys are conducted annually.
28. Develop and oversee the credentialing process.

Senior Director of Clinical Services & Director of Prior Auth and Credentialing:

1. Assist the senior-level medical director and all clinical services directors in developing and revising the applicable program(s), policies and procedures, annual evaluation(s), and work plan and presenting them for review and approval.
2. Assisting all Clinical Services Directors in monitoring and following up with all applicable QI activities.
3. Track compliance with reporting requirements and provide reports for the QIC meetings.
4. Overseeing the facility site review activities, when applicable
5. Ensuring that focused reviews are conducted as identified.
6. Interfacing with the Senior-level Medical Director and Medical Director designee for clinical quality of care and service issues.
7. Serve as a liaison about member clinical grievance case files and collaborate with designated

- behavioral health practitioners and Medical Director designee.
8. Serving as liaison with CMS, health plans, and other regulatory agencies for investigation, collaboration, and resolution of clinical grievances.
 9. Assist the senior-level medical director and all clinical services directors in developing and revising the QI program description, policies and procedures, annual evaluation, and work plan and presenting them for review and approval.
 10. Collect, monitor, and report data for tracking and trending.
 11. Serve as liaison with departments for investigation, collaboration, and resolution of all identified quality of care issues.
 12. Identify compliance problems, formulate recommendations for corrective action, and review QI corrective action plans.
 13. Collaborates with network provider offices and facility staff to identify and address quality of care issues, as needed.

QI Staff and Resources

AZPC has multidisciplinary staff to address all aspects of the department functions. AZPC has staff and resources to conduct statistical and data analysis sufficient to establish quality controls and improvement projects. Staff can develop access databases relevant to specific functions and pull appropriate information pertinent to specific studies.

Quality Improvement Committee (QIC)

The QIC is a standing committee responsible for developing, overseeing, guiding, and coordinating all quality improvement activities. The QIC has been designated and delegated the responsibility of providing an effective QI Program for our members and providers. The QIC monitors provisions of care, identifies problems, recommends corrective action, and guides the education of providers to improve healthcare outcomes and quality of service.

Scope (includes but not limited to):

1. Directing all Behavioral Health/Substance Use Disorder Dept QI activity.
2. Recommending policy decisions and revisions.
3. Reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating QI activities.
4. Ensuring provider participation in the QI Program through planning, design, implementation, and review.
5. Review and evaluate reports of QI activities and issues arising from its subcommittees.
6. Monitor, evaluate, and direct the overall compliance with the QI Program.
7. Annually review and approve the QI Program, work plan, and annual evaluation.
8. Overseeing and keeping staff and providers informed regarding QI and performance improvement projects, QI requirements, activities, updates or revisions, performance measures and results, utilization data, and profiling results.
9. Review and approve QI policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols.
10. Developing relevant subcommittees for designated activities and overseeing the standing subcommittee's roles, structures, functions, and frequency of meetings as described in this Program. Ad-hoc subcommittees may be developed for short-term projects.
11. Conducting peer review, assigning severity levels, and recommending corrective actions, as needed.
12. Review and evaluate reports regarding any/all critical incidents, reportable events, and sentinel events.

13. Reviewing and evaluating reports submitted by each health plan.
14. Responsibility for evaluating and giving recommendations concerning audit results, member experience surveys, provider experience surveys, access and availability audits, and any other QI studies as needed
15. Responsibility for evaluating and giving recommendations from monitoring and tracking reports.
16. Ensuring follow-up, as appropriate.
17. Providing a confidential mechanism of documentation, communication, and reporting of QI issues and activities to the Executive Committee, QIC, and other appropriate involved parties.
18. Assess the effectiveness of the QI Program and make modifications and enhancements as necessary on an ongoing and annual basis.
19. Ensuring that AZPC and its contracted providers meet the members' cultural and linguistic needs at all points of contact.
20. Ensuring members have access to all available services regardless of race, color, national origin, creed, ancestry, religion, language, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, health status, or disability.
21. Ensuring mechanisms are in place to identify and evaluate patient safety issues within the network and systems are established to facilitate effective resolutions.

Reporting

The QI Department shall submit a summary report of quality activities and actions for review and approval to the QIC every quarter. Reporting is completed by the QIC's approval during the quarterly and semi-annual meeting.

Composition

A Senior-level Medical Director shall chair the QIC, and his/her primary responsibilities may include but are not limited to:

1. Directing the QIC meetings.
2. Reporting QIC activities to the Executive Committee.
3. Acting on the committee's behalf for issues arising between meetings.
4. Ensuring all appropriate QI activities and reports are presented to the committee.
5. Ensuring there is a separation between medical and financial decision-making.

The Senior-level Medical Director, as the chairperson of the QIC, may designate a designee only when unable to attend the meeting.

Membership

Membership is assigned and will include representatives from the following disciplines:

1. A Senior-level Medical Director
2. AZPC Medical Directors
3. Director of HEDIS & Quality Management
4. Senior Director of Care Services
5. Director of Credentialing and Prior Authorization
6. Director of Provider Relations
7. Director of Contracting/Network Strategy
8. Behavioral Health Practitioners
9. Representation of network physicians serving our members to include Primary Care and Specialty Care Practitioners

10. Appropriate clinical representatives
11. Other members are appointed at the discretion of the Chairperson

QIC employees of AZPC are permanent members unless reassigned or employment ends. Independent physicians are assigned bi-annually or as vacancies arise and are staggered by the Committee Chair to protect the continuity of the committee functions. Representatives of regulatory agencies and health plans may attend upon written request and chair approval.

Quorum and Voting

Only physician members are allowed to vote. A quorum consists of at least three physicians, not including the Committee Chair. A majority vote makes all approval of actions, and motioned for approval by two voting physician members without challenge.

A committee member with a conflict of interest, which might impair objectivity in any review or decision process, shall not participate in any deliberation involving such issues or cast a vote on any related problem.

Non-physician members of the QIC may not vote but shall attend the meetings and support the deliberations. If the QIC cannot constitute a quorum for voting purposes because of conflicts of interest, alternate committee member(s) will be selected as needed at the discretion of the Chairperson. Representatives and other guests may attend the meetings upon invitation and prior approval.

Meetings

The QIC meets not less than quarterly but can meet more frequently if circumstances require or to accomplish the committee's objectives. The Committee Chair may act on the Committee's behalf on issues that arise between meetings.

Confidentiality

All committee members and participants, including network providers, consultants, and others, will maintain the standards of ethics and confidentiality regarding patient and proprietary information. The QIC must ensure that each of its members or attending guests is aware of the requirements related to confidentiality and conflicts of interest by having signed Statements on file and QIC sign-in sheets with requirements noted on them.

Breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Activities and minutes of the QIC are for the sole and confidential use of AZPC and are protected by State and Federal laws and the Healthcare Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Recording of Meeting and Dissemination of Action

All QIC meetings are recorded by taking minutes, which are signed and dated and reflect all committee decisions. Meeting minutes and all documentation used by the QIC are the sole property of AZPC and are strictly confidential. QIC meetings may be combined so a single meeting represents all services. When quality issues are identified, the QIC meeting minutes must document discussions of the following:

1. Identified issues.
2. Responsible party for interventions or activities.
3. Proposed actions.
4. Evaluation of the actions taken.
5. Timelines, including start and end dates.

6. Additional recommendations or acceptance of the results as applicable.

For each QIC meeting conducted:

1. A written agenda will be used for each meeting.
2. Meeting minutes shall be comprehensive and timely and show indicators, recommendations, follow-up, and evaluation of activities.
3. The minutes are recorded in a nationally recommended format. All unresolved issues/action items are tracked in the minutes until resolved.
4. The minutes and all case-related correspondence must be maintained in the Clinical Services Department.
5. The minutes must be available for review by appropriate regulatory and accrediting agencies but may not be removed from the premises.

The dissemination of QIC information and findings to physicians may take various forms. Practitioners and providers must be informed of information related to their performance. These methods may include but not be limited to:

1. Informal one-on-one meetings
2. Formal medical educational meetings
3. Newsletters
4. Provider Relations and physician reports
5. Quarterly and semi-annual reports to the Executive Committee
6. AZPC's Website

Credentialing Committee

The Credentialing Committee consists of physicians on AZPC's QIC panel and a minimum of three (3) practitioners currently contracted with AZPC. A minimum of three physician members is required for a quorum, including the Chairperson and two practicing physicians.

The Credentialing Committee

1. Has final authority to approve or disapprove applications by providers for AZPC participation or delegate such authority to a Senior-level Medical Director for supporting clean applications, provided that such designation is documented and provides reasonable guidelines.
2. Discusses whether organizational providers are meeting reasonable standards of care.
3. Access appropriate clinical peer input when discussing standards of care for a particular organizational provider.
4. Review files for organizational providers not meeting AZPC's established criteria.
5. Review files for State survey and licensing deficiencies of organizational providers.
6. Reviews files for reported potential quality of care issues, reportable events, sentinel events, critical incidents, complaints, and the facility has been sanctioned by a regulatory agency.
7. Maintains minutes of all committee meetings and documents all actions.
8. Guide AZPC staff on the overall direction of the Credentialing Plan.
9. Evaluate and report to AZPC management on the effectiveness of the Credentialing Plan.
10. Review and approve credentialing policies and procedures at least annually.
11. Meets as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities, but no less than quarterly.
12. Can delegate authority to the senior clinical staff person, such as another medical director or other

equally qualified provider, for approving clean applications for continuing participation.

Peer Review

Peer review is conducted in any situation where peers are needed to assess the appropriateness or necessity of a particular course of treatment, to review or monitor a pattern of care provided by a specific practitioner, or to review aspects of care, behavior, or practice, as may be deemed inappropriate.

1. The Senior-level Medical Director, or designated physician, is responsible for authorizing the referral of cases for peer review.
2. All peer review consultants (including members of the Credentials/Peer Review or ad-hoc Peer Review Committees) are licensed professionals in active practice.
3. At least one consultant will be a practitioner with the same or similar specialty training as the practitioner whose care is being reviewed, except in those cases where there is no applicable board certification for the specialty.
4. The Senior-level Medical Director can send cases out for a specialty review and consultation to be used for the peer review process.
5. The Senior-level Medical Director will confirm that the peer review consultants have the necessary experience and qualifications for the review.
6. The QI Director prepares all materials for review by the Peer Review Committee to conduct all follow-ups, as required by the Committee.

Peer Review Committee

The Peer Review Committee's sole purpose is to improve the quality of the medical and behavioral healthcare provided to our members by practitioners and providers. AZPC cannot delegate the function of peer review to another entity.

The Peer Review Committee's scope includes the review of cases where there is evidence of deficient quality or the omission of the care or service provided by a participating or non-participating healthcare professional or provider.

The Peer Review Committee meetings are held quarterly or as needed. The Peer Review Committee is a sub-committee represented by members of the Credentialing Committee that reviews the potential of quality care issues, resulting in a severe member negative outcome. At a minimum, the Peer Review Committee shall include:

1. The Medical Director and appointed physician designee.
2. A behavioral health provider when a behavioral health specialty is being reviewed. The committee may utilize peers through external consultation.

Peer Review Committee Functions

1. Peer Review Committee members shall sign a confidential and conflict of interest statement at each meeting.
2. Committee members must not participate in peer review activities if they are directly or indirectly interested in the outcome.
3. The Peer Review Committee must evaluate the case referred to peer review based on all information made available through the QI Management process.
4. The Peer Review Committee makes recommendations to the BH Medical Director. Together, they

must determine appropriate action, including, but not limited to, peer contact, education, credentials, limits on new member enrollment, sanctions, or other corrective actions. The BH Medical Director is responsible for ensuring that the disciplinary actions are implemented.

5. The Peer Review Committee makes recommendations to the Medical Director and referrals to Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, the appropriate regulatory agency or board, and State agency for further investigation or action if not already referred during the QPI process. Notification must occur when the committee determines care was not provided according to community standards. Initial notice may be verbal but must be followed by a written report.
6. All information used in the peer review process is kept confidential and is not discussed outside of the peer review process. The reports, meetings, minutes, documents, recommendations, and participants must be kept confidential except for implementing recommendations made by the peer review committee.

Peer review meetings are protected by State and Federal law, and documents from the proceedings must not leave the room and shall be collected by staff at the meeting's closure. Any committee member copies, hand-written notes, post-it notes, or other material that will not be retained in the case file must be destroyed at the end of the session.

Peer review documentation must be provided to State and Federal agencies upon request. Providers and practitioners must be informed regarding the peer review process and peer review grievance procedures.

Participation in Community Initiatives

AZPC may participate in applicable community initiatives including, but not limited to:

1. Quality management and QI.
2. Preventive health initiatives
3. Disease management initiatives (when delegated)
4. Behavioral health initiatives
5. Other community-specific initiatives and collaborations, as requested by contracted health plans

QI Process

AZPC utilizes a QI process to identify opportunities to improve the quality of care and service for all members. AZPC adopts and maintains clinical guidelines, criteria, quality screens, audit tools, and other standard surveys for measuring quality of care, access, and service.

Health/Clinical Service Contracting

AZPC contracts with individual practitioners and providers, including those making UM decisions, specify that contractors cooperate with its QI Program to improve the quality of care and services, as well as the members' experience. This shall include the collection and evaluation of data and participation in our QI Program.

A practitioner is a licensed or certified professional who provides behavioral healthcare or medical care services. An organizational provider is an institution or organization that provides services for our members, such as a hospital, residential treatment center, home health agency, or rehabilitation facility.

For this section, practitioners and organizational providers will be known as “providers.”

Our contracts will foster open communication and cooperation with all QI activities. Our agreements with providers will specifically require that:

1. Providers cooperate with QI activities.
2. Providers maintain the confidentiality of member information and records and shall keep member information confidential and secure.
3. Providers allow the plan to use their performance data. This shall include allowing the collection and evaluation of performance measurement data and assisting the organization in improving clinical and service measures.
4. Providers will provide access to medical records as State and Federal law permits.
5. Providers will give timely notification to members affected by their termination.
6. Providers shall not discriminate against any beneficiary in the provision of contracted services whether based on the beneficiary’s coverage under a benefit program, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, handicap, health status, source of payment, utilization of medical or mental health services, equipment, pharmaceuticals or supplies, or other unlawful bases including, without limitation, the filing by such beneficiary of any complaint, grievance, or legal action against the provider or payer.

Contracts include an affirmative Statement indicating that providers may freely communicate with patients about the treatment options available, including medication treatment options, regardless of benefit coverage limitations.

Availability of Practitioners

In creating and developing our delivery system of practitioners, AZPC considers the preferences and the unique and cultural needs of our members. AZPC will ensure that our network has sufficient numbers and types of practitioners and providers to effectively meet the needs and preferences of our membership by:

1. Annually assessing the cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic needs of our members.
2. Annually assess the number and geographic distribution of each type of practitioner providing primary care, specialty care, behavioral healthcare, hospital-based care, and ancillary care to our members.
3. Adjusting the availability of practitioners within our network based on the community served, the local delivery system, and clinical safety.
4. Linking members with practitioners who can meet members’ cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic needs and preferences.

AZPC establishes the availability of behavioral healthcare by:

1. Ensuring that standards are in place to define high-volume and high-impact behavioral healthcare practitioners (psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, etc.).
2. Ensuring a database is in place that analyzes practitioner availability and ability to meet the unique cultural needs of our members.
3. Ensuring a database is in place that analyzes the geographic distribution of our members to our primary care, specialty care, behavioral healthcare, hospital-based, and ancillary practitioners.
4. Facilitating transportation for members as needed, as delegated.
5. Providing processes for member requests for special cultural and language needs.

- Annual reviews and measurement of the effectiveness of these standards through specialized studies.

Access to Service

AZPC has established standards and mechanisms to assure the accessibility of behavioral healthcare and member services. Standards include, but are not limited to:

- Regular and routine care appointments
- Urgent care appointments
- Non-life-threatening emergency care
- Life-threatening emergency care
- Follow-up care post-hospitalization
- After-hours access and care

Behavioral Health (BH) Accessibility Standards	
Appointment Type	Time-Elapsed Standards
Routine Appointment (includes non-physician behavioral health providers).	Must offer the appointment within \leq 10 business days of the request.
Urgent Care Appointments Services for non-life-threatening conditions that could lead to a potentially harmful outcome if not treated promptly.	Must offer the appointment within \leq 48 hours of request.
Non-Life-Threatening Emergency	Must offer the appointment \leq 6 hours of the request.
Life-Threatening Emergency Care	Immediately
Follow Up Care After Hospitalization for Mental Illness	Must Provide Both: One follow-up encounter with a mental health provider \leq 7 calendar days after discharge. Plus, One follow-up encounter with a mental health provider \leq 30 calendar days after discharge.

AZPC’s employed and contracted practitioners and providers shall comply with all Federal and State accessibility guidelines. Annual access-to-care audits will be conducted using the standards to implement and measure improvements made in performance.

Behavioral Healthcare Grievance Process

AZPC will report separate member complaints and appeal assessment results concerning behavioral healthcare. As such, each quarter, AZPC will evaluate our member complaints and appeals by collecting data for each of the following five (5) categories:

- Access
- Customer Service

3. Office Site
4. Quality of Care
5. Other - Additional sub-type categories of behavior healthcare grievances will be reviewed, tracked, and analyzed for trends.

The data collected is further aggregated and evaluated by

1. Number and type of grievance
2. Number of grievances by Severity Level
3. Grievances by Subtype
4. Grievances PKPM

Sufficient data is collected to identify areas of dissatisfaction on which we can act. The rates are computed over time by reason. Annually, we conduct a quantitative and causal analysis of our aggregate results and trends over time and compare our results against a standard goal. AZPC completes investigations of grievances and forwards results to the health plan. AZPC identifies opportunities for improvement based on analysis and their significance to our members.

Member Experience Survey

AZPC conducts Member Experience Surveys throughout the year. A contracted provider may also conduct Member Experience Surveys to assist AZPC QIC in reaching conclusions about the services provided to our members. The experience surveys must consist of the core questions plus additional questions specific to their experience with healthcare services, accessibility of care, continuity of care, and the quality of care and service.

AZPC evaluates the results of the surveys received. AZPC will develop improvement plans to address the areas identified. All results are presented to the QI Committee for review and recommendations.

Complex Care Management (CCM)

AZPC coordinates services for members with complex conditions and helps them access needed resources. The program includes all information and interventions the organization implements for a member or provider to improve healthcare delivery and management and promote quality, cost-effective outcomes.

CCM is the coordination of care and services provided to members who have experienced a critical event or diagnosis that requires extensive resources and who need help navigating the system to facilitate appropriate delivery of care and services. Members eligible for CCM may include those with physical or developmental disabilities, multiple chronic conditions, or severe injuries.

Since CCM is considered an opt-out program, all eligible members can participate or decline participation.

The goal of CCM is to help members regain optimum health and improved functional capability in the least restrictive setting and a cost-effective manner. It involves a comprehensive assessment of the member's condition, determination of available benefits and resources, and developing and implementing a patient-centered care management plan with performance goals, monitoring, and follow-up.

Distinguishing factors of CCM:

1. The degree and complexity of illness or condition are typically severe.

2. The level of management necessary is typically intensive.
3. The resources required for members to regain optimal health and improved functionality are typically extensive.

Annually, AZPC will assess the entire CCM population and sub-populations based on the needs of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI).

Based on the findings, AZPC will review and update the AZPC CCM process, health education, and resources to meet our members' needs effectively. The goal of the AZPC health education initiatives is to improve the health status of members and to educate practitioners and providers in a variety of modalities to help them educate their patients. Education modalities may include preventive health literature, educational classes, and wellness programs.

Special Needs Program (SNP)

The Special Needs Program (SNP) is a Medicare program that focuses on three populations:

- Those with chronic conditions.
- Those who are deemed institutional.
- Those who have Medicare and Medicaid dual benefits.

The care management departments have written processes for identifying enrollees with multiple or sufficiently severe chronic conditions and meet the criteria for participation in the program when delegated by the health plan.

When delegated, all Special Needs Program members complete an annual risk assessment, where an individualized care plan for that member is generated and completed. The criteria are developed, reviewed, and approved through the QIC. The program details which chronic conditions are monitored, the types of services offered, and the measures used to assess performance.

Clinical Practice Guidelines

AZPC is accountable for adopting and disseminating clinical practice guidelines relevant to members for providing preventive, acute, or chronic medical and behavioral health services.

AZPC uses evidence-based guidelines to help practitioners and members decide about appropriate healthcare for specific clinical circumstances and behavioral health services. AZPC will distribute guidelines to their practitioners by posting them on our website or through the provider web portals. Notification of online availability will be faxed to our network providers within 30 days of QIC approval. In addition, if changes or revisions are made, a notice will be sent to the practitioners by fax blast within 30 days of QIC approval.

AZPC adopts nationally recognized Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs), including professional medical associations, voluntary health organizations, and NIH Centers and Institutes. If the guidelines are not from a recognized source, they are created with the involvement of a board-certified practitioner. Selected CPGs are presented to the QIC for discussion and recommendations. Evidence-based CPGs shall be adopted for at least two medical conditions and at least two behavioral conditions, with at least one behavioral health guideline addressing children's and adolescents' care.

We ensure all clinical practice guidelines are reviewed and approved through the QIC at least every two years and as needed if changes are made.

Preventative Health Guidelines

AZPC will adopt and disseminate Preventive Health Guidelines (PHGs) for care for our population.

AZPC approves, adopts, and disseminates these Preventive Health Guidelines to improve healthcare quality and reduce unnecessary variation in care. AZPC will post guidelines to our contracted providers on the website. Notification of online availability will be faxed to our network providers within 30 days of QIC approval. In addition, if changes or revisions to the guidelines occur, a notice will be sent to the practitioners by fax blast within 30 days of QIC approval.

AZPC adopts nationally recognized Preventive Health Guidelines (PHGs) from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force for adults. AZPC may include other guidelines from professional medical associations, voluntary health organizations, and NIH Centers and Institutes. If the guidelines are not from a recognized source, they are created with the involvement of a board-certified practitioner.

Selected PHGs are taken through the QIC for discussion and recommendations. Preventive Health Guidelines are reviewed and approved through the QIC at least every two years and as needed if changes are made.

Continuity & Coordination Between Medical & Behavioral Healthcare

AZPC monitors the quality and coordination of behavioral health services. The update must include, but is not limited to, diagnosis of chronic conditions, support for the petitioning process for long-term care, and all medication prescribed.

Annually, data is collected regarding opportunities for collaboration and assessment for:

1. Exchange of information between behavioral healthcare and primary care practitioners, medical/surgical specialists, organizational providers, or other relevant medical delivery systems.
2. Appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and referral of behavioral disorders commonly seen in primary care settings.
3. Appropriate use of psychotropic medications and consistent guidelines for prescribing by behavioral and medical practitioners (HEDIS Antidepressant Medication Management).
4. Screening and managing of patients with coexisting medical and behavioral conditions.
5. Consultations of medical or surgical inpatients with secondary mental illness or substance abuse disorder.
6. Development and adoption of primary prevention programs for behavioral healthcare.
7. Development and adoption of primary education programs to promote the prevention of substance abuse, stress management programs, depression management programs, and bereavement counseling.
8. Develop and adopt secondary preventive programs for behavioral healthcare and behavioral health consultations for targeted medical or surgical conditions.
9. Development and adoption of programs to meet the needs of members with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI).

AZPC identifies opportunities to improve continuity and coordination of care between medical and behavioral health providers through routine medical and treatment record reviews, review of behavioral healthcare referrals, review of behavioral healthcare consultations, HEDIS antidepressant medication studies, grievance reviews, and member experience surveys. This collaborative information is measured, tracked, and analyzed to identify opportunities for improvement. Actions and interventions are taken to improve our members' experience and the continuity and coordination of care between our primary care physicians and the behavioral healthcare providers.

Patient Safety Program

AZPC works to develop a patient safety program that identifies, supports, and facilitates patient safety throughout our network operations. This program evaluates multiple aspects of the patient care process, such as hospital safety, health education, practitioner office safety, and drug utilization safety.

Medication Review

Initiatives are in place through various processes (e.g., ICT, medical record review, pharmacist review) to identify members who are on medications that are contraindicated or when warnings have been issued. Members prescribed ten (10) or more medications should be referred to the AZPC/DOHC pharmacist for patient safety, drug-to-drug interactions, and drug-disease interactions with notification to the member's primary care provider.

Medication Reconciliation

A complete medication reconciliation review, as defined by CMS, will be completed by an RN within thirty (30) days from the date of discharge and will be communicated to the next known provider or service when the patient is referred or transferred to another setting, service, practitioner, or level of care.

Facility Site Reviews

The QI Department provides the Credentialing Department with facility site review and medical record audit scores and any sanctioned activity related to those reviews and with identified issues, when applicable.

Potential Quality Issues (PQI)

A significant component of the QI Program is identifying and reviewing potential quality issues and implementing appropriate corrective action to address confirmed quality of care issues. A PQI is a deviation or suspected deviation from expected practitioner performance, clinical care, or care outcome that cannot be determined to be justified without additional review. Such issues must be referred to the QI Department.

Sentinel Events / Critical Incidents

A sentinel event or critical incident is "an unexpected occurrence involving death or serious physical or psychological injury, or the risk thereof. Serious injury specifically includes loss of limb or function. The phrase, 'or risk thereof' includes any process variation for which a recurrence carries a significant chance of a serious adverse outcome."

A significant component of the QI Program is the use of sentinel events to monitor important aspects of care, accessibility, and service in medical and behavioral healthcare. These events are called "sentinel" because they signal the need for immediate investigation and response. All sentinel events must be monitored, tracked, and investigated.

Serious Reportable Adverse Events

A reportable severe adverse event (SRAE) is an incident involving death or severe harm to a patient resulting from a lapse or error in a healthcare facility. It is broken down into three major categories by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services:

1. Never Events.
2. Hospital Acquired Condition (HAC).
3. Provider Preventable Condition.

AZPC will ensure compliance with all Federal and State guidelines. All reportable severe adverse events will be monitored, tracked, and investigated.

Clinical Measurement Activities & Quality Performance Reporting

AZPC adheres to all applicable regulatory standards for quality performance reporting. AZPC will cooperate with and assist regulators and their contracted QI Organizations (QIO). AZPC uses data collection and analysis to track clinical issues that are relevant to the population. AZPC will adopt and establish quantitative measures to assess performance and to identify and prioritize as appropriate.

Health Plan Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) and Structure and Process Measures

AZPC actively participates in annual Health Plan Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) and Structure and Process measures. HEDIS Studies and Structure and Process measures are by CMS and NCQA standards.

AZPC collects HEDIS and Structures and Process measure data through multiple sources:

1. Claims and encounter data.
2. Proactive medical record review.
3. Complex Care Management and Special Needs Programs (when delegated).
4. Proactive measure review.
5. Specialized software program that runs each measure proactively every month during the measurement year.
6. Member listings of services that have not been captured are provided to primary care practitioners at least every six (6) months.
7. Annual education and training of practitioners and their office staff.
8. HEDIS coordinators work alongside and provide provider relations representatives detailed reports to contact primary care practitioners and discuss the importance of the reports and services not yet captured, a minimum of every three (3) months to discuss the importance of these services.

HEDIS measure outcome data is compared to national benchmarks (or if a benchmark is unavailable, a goal is established), and final rates are reported through QIC. A formal corrective action plan will be developed for all measures that do not meet minimum performance levels (25th percentile of the national rate or not meeting goal) or have a significant drop in rate. A written plan will detail specific actions or processes aimed at improving rates.

Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services 5-Star Program

The Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services 5 Star Program is responsible for reaching out to practitioners and their office staff and providing them with intensive education and incentives. In addition,

practitioners can obtain the program tools/information via AZPC’s provider web portal. The CMS Star Program was implemented to make changes at the “point of care” and ensure members received required annual services and that the appropriate use of diagnosis codes is captured.

A vital component of the CMS Star Program is to develop strong and collaborative relationships with practitioners and office staff through outreach efforts. In addition, through this educational mechanism, staff will comply as it relates to CMS Star Technical Specifications, Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) Measures and the completion of encounter forms, collection of HCC Diagnosis Codes, Initial Health Risk Assessment related to Medicare members (if available), improve patient care and overall improvement of medical record documentation practices.

As part of the Quality Outreach Program, staff will routinely visit the office site, offering intensive education on the following:

1. Electronic system orientation and training.
2. Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) and CMS Stars.
3. Improving documentation practices.
4. Providing tools that focus the practitioner’s office on specific members requiring services and the use of CMS Star and HEDIS-specific encounter billing and documentation.
5. Suggestions and assistance in developing office processes increase opportunities for these services to be ordered and completed.
6. Identify opportunities to limit barriers between the physician and the health plan.
7. Collaborate on collecting important diagnosis and procedure codes and service information to limit the intrusion into the physician's office.
8. Inform the physician that staff is the resource for answering questions and resolving issues quickly.
9. Work toward improvement in members' access to care.
10. Offer practice management suggestions that would limit barriers to care.
11. Look for opportunities to free up physician time to spend additional time with the patient.
12. Provide in-service reminders that will be placed on the member’s medical record (i.e., colorectal cancer screening completed).
13. Educate the provider’s office on submitting Medicare diagnosis and procedure codes through the encounter/claims systems while utilizing an incentive program.
14. Identify Medicare members who have not been seen or have gaps to help them schedule their needed services with contracted providers and facilities: in-service practitioners and staff on how they can increase revenue through the improvement of documentation and data submission.
15. In-service on completing an Annual Wellness Assessment of the Medicare members, including scheduling the member to be seen by the physician for incentive opportunities.

Other QI Activity

Corrective Action Plans

AZPC, when conducting any activity that reveals any opportunity for improvement, will develop a corrective action plan. The corrective action plans can be created from issues arising from, but not limited to:

1. Member/Practitioner Experience Surveys
2. Access to care audits/surveys
3. Availability audits/surveys

4. Potential or actual quality of care issues
5. Grievances received from the health plan

Arizona Priority Care conducts other quality improvement studies deemed necessary to ensure quality of service to members. Follow-up surveys and focus audits may be performed based on our findings and actions taken as the QI Committee recommends.

Dissemination of Information

All QI activities are presented and reviewed by the QIC. Communication to QIC may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Policies and procedures
2. Medical record and facility audit reports and trends
3. Delegation audit results
4. Member/Practitioner Experience Survey results
5. Member grievance statistics and trends
6. Sentinel vents
7. Reportable events
8. Special study outcomes
9. UM statistics and trends, as applicable QI activities
10. QI Program, work plan, annual evaluation, and quarterly reports
11. New or changed regulatory and legislative information

Results of QI activities are communicated to practitioners and providers most appropriately, including but not limited to:

1. Correspondence with the practitioner or provider showing individual results and a comparison to the group, when available
2. Newsletter articles
3. Fax updates
4. Email updates
5. Provider Manual updates

The QI Program description is made available to all network practitioners and members. Members and practitioners are notified of the availability of the QI Program through the website, Provider Manual, and newsletters. The results and intervention analysis are available by request for all practitioners and members. The notification of online availability is sent by fax blast to all network providers within 30 days of QIC approval.

Effectiveness of the QI Program

QI Work Plans

The QI Work Plan is developed annually, outlining QI activities for the year. The work plans will include all activities and tasks for clinical care and monitoring access and availability of covered services. The work plans are reviewed by a Senior-level Medical Director and submitted to the QIC and Executive Committee for review and comment.

The work plan must include the following information:

1. A description of all planned activities.
2. Beginning and ending dates for all objectives.
3. Methodologies to accomplish measurable goals and objectives.
4. Measurable behavioral health goals and objectives.
5. Staff positions /departments responsible and accountable for meeting established goals and objectives.

The QI Work Plan is a fluid document and is revised, as needed, to meet changing priorities and regulatory requirements and identify areas for improvement.

Semi-Annual Reports

Semi-annual reports evaluate the progress of the QI activities, as outlined in the work plan, and are submitted to the QIC and Executive Committee for review and recommendations.

Annual Plan Evaluation

QI activities, as defined by the QI Work Plan, will be evaluated annually to measure our performance for the year and to assist in revising the QI Program and preparing the following year's work plan. The evaluations are reviewed by a Senior-level Medical Director and submitted to the QIC and Executive Committee for review and approval.

NCQA HEDIS

The annual QI evaluation report must contain a summary of all QI activities performed throughout the year, to include:

1. Title/name of each activity.
2. Measurable goals and objectives related to each activity.
3. Department or staff positions involved in the QI activity.
4. Description of communication and feedback related to QI data and activities.
5. An evaluation of baseline data and outcomes utilizing qualitative and quantitative data must include a statement describing if the goals were met completely, partially, or not at all.
6. Actions to be taken to improve corrective action plans (CAPs) and Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs).
7. Documentation of continued monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions (interventions) and other follow-up activities.
8. Rationale for changes in the scope of the QI program and plan or documentation indicating if no changes were made.
9. Necessary follow-up with targeted timelines for revisions made to the QI plan.
10. Documentation of QIC review, evaluation, and approval of any changes to the QI plan.
11. An evaluation of the previous year's activities must be submitted as part of the QI Plan after review by the QIC.

Resources, QI Personnel & Interdepartmental Interface

Utilization Management Department

The Utilization Management (UM) Department frequently identifies potential risk management, quality of care issues, and health education needs through care management, inpatient review, utilization review,

referrals, etc. The QI Department can refer cases to the UM Department for active care management of members with identified chronic conditions.

Customer Services Department

When a Customer Services Representative identifies a potential quality of care issue or grievance from a member's call, the member is informed of their right to file a grievance and is assisted with initiating contact with the respective health plan. The issue is then forwarded to the QI Department tracking. The Customer Services Department records all incoming calls by specific tracking, trending and reporting indicators.

Credentialing Department

The Credentialing Department is part of the QI Department. QI information is provided to the Credentialing Department for inclusion in the credentialing/re-credentialing process. The QI Department provides the Credentialing Department with medical record audit scores and any sanctioned activity related to those reviews and with identified Quality of Care Issues (QICs)/Potential Quality Issues (PQIs) as appropriate. The Director of Quality, Credentialing, and Compliance will take peer review cases directed by the Senior-level Medical Director to the Peer Review Committee for review and action.

Provider Relations and Network Contracting Departments

The Provider Relations and Network Contracting Departments assist the AZPC QI Department in obtaining QI information from and disseminating information to practitioners. In addition, the Provider Relations and Network Contracting Department:

1. Serve as liaisons between the AZPC QI Department and practitioners to facilitate education and compliance with approved AZPC standards
2. Serve as liaisons with network behavioral health practitioners
3. Assists the QI Department with practitioners who do not comply with requests from the QI Department
4. Ensures contracted ancillary providers and facilities meet regulatory and accreditation requirements

Claims Department

The QI Department utilizes claims data to identify potential quality of care issues, including critical incidents, reportable events, and sentinel event diagnoses. The QI Department can obtain medical records from the Claims Department as available.

Health Informatics Department

The AZPC QI Department works collaboratively with the Health Informatics Department to collect, analyze, and integrate data into the AZPC QI process. The AZPC QI Department works with Health Informatics to ensure accurate and complete data. Specialized and standardized reports are generated through the various systems and programs to continuously monitor data elements. Data is maintained for regulatory agency review through this department. The data is also used to conduct an annual review of the overall AZPC QI Program. Informatics has built specialized databases to track grievances, complaints, and potential quality issues for monitoring and corrective actions. Data being submitted from outside vendors or sent out of our organization goes through the Informatics Department and the Information Systems Department to ensure all HIPAA regulations are met. No file containing member-specific information is sent out of the QI Department without meeting all HIPAA requirements.

Delegation of Quality Improvement

AZPC **does not delegate** QI activities. For any delegated activity from the health plan, there shall be a signed

and dated agreement:

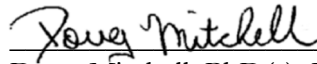
1. Stating that it is mutually agreed upon;
2. Describing the delegated activities and the responsibilities of the health plan and AZPC;
3. Requiring at least semi-annual reporting by AZPC;
4. Describing the process by which the health plan will evaluate AZPC's performance;
5. Describing the remedies available to the health plan if AZPC does not fulfill its obligations up to and including revocation of the delegation agreement.

Approval

This AZPC Behavioral Health Quality Program Description was approved on the fifteenth of February, 2024 at the Quality Management Meeting. The affixed signatures below endorse approval. Approval is valid for, at maximum, of one year



Pawan Dhawan, MD, MBA-Senior Medical Director
Clinical Services
AZ Priority Care



Doug Mitchell, PhD(c), RN, BC, CPHQ, CPHRM
Director, HEDIS, Clinical Compliance & Quality
Management Services
AZ Priority Care

2/15/2024

Date

2/15/2024

Date

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