

Call to Action!

CMS Proposes Decreasing Patient Safety Transparency

CMS has published the 2019 Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) proposed rule. Among other things, this proposed rule would remove certain critical patient safety measures from the one and only federal program that exists to publicly report safety and quality information by hospitals: the Inpatient Quality Reporting Program (IQR). Under the IQR, hospitals are paid by Medicare to report on errors, injuries, and infections, and that information is publicly reported for patients, purchasers, and other stakeholders. There are 6 infection measures and 10 patient safety measures that are proposed for removal from the program.

Among the reasons given in the proposed rule for removing these measures from the IQR is the amount of time hospitals spend collecting the data and reporting the measures, about 2 million hours. Yet studies suggest that infections cost the economy \$147 billion per year. While Medicare should scale its payments to the actual quality of services delivered, that's no substitute for letting consumers and payers decide for ourselves how well a hospital is doing—the central purpose of the IQR. Moreover, the measures in the IQR allow employers, health plans, and other purchasers to structure their own contracts and purchasing programs to get better value.

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- The National Alliance and the Coalitions and Purchasers it represents have long maintained that transparency of both cost and quality is foundational to moving to a value-based healthcare marketplace.
- Leapfrog, our sister organization, is issuing a call to action for individuals and organizations to counter a significant threat to the transparency of the safety of American hospitals. Leapfrog is asking supporters of transparency to send a letter ([or sign theirs](#)) commenting on this year's CMS proposed rule for the Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS).
- The National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions has signed onto Leapfrog's letter and fully support their efforts to ensure we maintain this critical transparency initiative. Coalitions are encouraged to submit their own comment letters on the proposed rule, [and/or sign onto Leapfrog's letter](#). Leapfrog is requesting signatures by June 22, 2018.
- Comments on the proposed rule are due to CMS by June 25, 2018.