

A New Direction for the College

We are excited to announce an important change that will enhance the membership and future direction of the American College of Medical Quality. On May 10, 2014, the College held a membership strategy session in Maryland. The focus of the session was to explore and propose ways to increase membership in the College.

A number of suggestions were made and a formal proposal was sent to the ACMQ Board of Trustees for consideration during the Board's meeting on June 10, 2014. During this meeting, the Board made a momentous decision that will markedly enhance the College's focus and effectiveness: the Board voted unanimously to extend full membership status in the College to healthcare professionals with Master level degrees. This change will enable an enhanced cadre of healthcare professionals to participate on College committees, vote on College issues, serve on the ACMQ Board, and hold executive offices.

An Evolving Role

Why did the ACMQ Board decide to evolve the College in this direction? It has a great deal to do with why the College was founded. ACMQ was founded in Pennsylvania in 1973 as the American College of Utilization Review Physicians. In 1991, the name was changed to the American College of Medical Quality to reflect the evolving changes in the specialty of medical quality.

At the time of the College's founding, the discipline of medical quality was a relatively new science for most physicians and researchers. As such, the College focused its membership and efforts on educating physicians, physicians-in-training, and PhDs about numerous aspects of medical quality, including utilization review, quality assurance, and newly introduced public payer and insurance sector regulations.

Taking Medical Quality Mainstream

For the next forty years, educating physicians and PhDs about medical quality would remain the College's focus and we were highly successful in meeting the goal of advancing the field of medical quality. In fact, the College has been so successful in this regard that medical quality has "gone mainstream" and evolved from a niche field for physicians and researchers to become an integral focus worldwide for specialty societies, medical board exams, governmental and private payers, and providers of all types.

Over these past four decades, much about the healthcare profession has changed. From the College's perspective, ensuring the delivery of high quality medical care has evolved to become a "team sport." While physicians continue to play valuable roles in promoting and educating others about the field of medical quality, the field now includes a much more diverse and experienced set of "team players", including quality experts, educators, and leaders who hold advanced practice nursing degrees, Pharm Ds, MBAs, MHAs, etc.

As we embark on the fifth decade of the ACMQ's existence, the Board decided that we must expand the College's membership potential to enable a wider array of healthcare professionals to help ACMQ shape the future direction of medical quality.

What Does This Mean for ACMQ Members?

The purpose of the College remains the same: to teach medical quality to those who are responsible for leading and managing medical quality initiatives for payers, providers, academic medical centers, teaching institutions, etc. The value proposition for being a member of the ACMQ has become broader.

The College's longstanding role in providing education in leadership in quality and safety will continue, as will the College's role in providing members with a gateway to resources, programs, networking, mentoring, professional development opportunities, and our prestigious journal, the *American Journal of Medical Quality*. What is most exciting is the College will now be providing these opportunities and assets to a far more diverse community of healthcare professionals who support the implementation and innovation of quality based medicine.

How You Can Help

Over the course of the next few months, the ACMQ will embark on numerous efforts to increase College awareness and membership enrollments/renewals - your assistance will be needed. We will be calling on you to identify like-minded colleagues and peers and to encourage them to join and participate actively in the ACMQ. We will be calling on you to encourage attendance at next Spring's Annual Meeting, Medical Quality 2015, which will have a theme promoting team-based quality education and initiatives. We will also ask you for your ideas and suggestions about how the ACMQ can play a more active role in shaping the future of medical quality.

Indeed, this is an exciting time for the American College of Medical Quality. We are confident that this new direction is the correct step in our evolution and will help us enhance markedly the effectiveness of all that we have done over the past 40 years and all that we will accomplish for decades to come.