Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting Program

Unlocking the Secrets of the Question and Answer (Q&A) Tool

Presentation

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Pam Harris: Hello, and welcome to the Hospital Outpatient and Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting Program webinar. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Pam Harris, a project coordinator for the Hospital Outpatient and Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting Programs.

For our OQR listeners, November 1st, 2016 is the submission deadline for Clinical Data and Population and Sampling for Quarter 2 2016. This will be for encounter dates from April 1st through June 30th, 2016. Also for our OQR listeners, there is an update announcement for www.qualityreportingcenter.com. There's a new program rule history tab now available. This is a quick reference to be able to research the *Federal Register* for each year of the OQR Program.

For our ASCQR listeners, www.qualityreportingcenter.com also has updates for you. A tab has been added for program rule history. From this tab you'll be able to research the *Federal Register* for each year of the ASCQR Program. Also, the ASC site has an updated web-based measure listing look-up tool. This site provides a quick way to determine if your facility has completed data submission using a web-based tool for all the web-based measures, including ASC-8, the flu data. You can also look up your facility's CCN number using the NPI number, or look up the NPI number with the CCN number.

The next update is the added tab for Qualit-e-Quips. Qualit-e-Quips are newsletters which provide high-level, easy-to-ready communications on a single topic affecting the ASC community. This is sent to you via ListServe, but it can't help you if you can't find it. So now you'll have all the Qualit-e-Quips under one tab. Now this is kind of the ground level with the updates for

the www.qualityreportingcenter.com website because there's much more to come, so it's worth a look.

Before I introduce our speaker today, let me just mention that we are presenting this webinar to the Hospital Outpatient Quality Reporting Program as well as the Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting Program. And the reason for this is that the information and the steps for each program are the same. So, as Harold is giving an example showing Ambulatory Surgical Center steps, it would be the same steps for Outpatient. This also works in reverse; the steps showing OQR steps are the same for the ASCQR.

Now, for persons that may be new to the program or just have overlooked the Q&A tool, let me give you just a brief explanation of what the Q&A tool is. The Q&A tool is an application that is located on the www.qualitynet.org home page. The Q&A tool is where you can submit any program question in writing and receive back a written answer. Harold will also show you how to look at past questions and answers that may provide an answer to your question so that you don't have to wait for the answer to come back to you.

Now this is a very, very simplified review of the Q&A tool. And to find out the secrets of the Q&A tool, let me introduce today's speaker, Harold Hicks. Harold has a diverse IT background, including technical support program analysis and systems administration. Harold is the Q&A site system administrator for the CMS support contractor. Harold?

Harold Hicks: Thank you, Pam, and hello everyone. My name is Harold Hicks, and I am the system administrator of the Q&A site. Today's overall goal is to help acquaint you, our customers, on how to most effectively use the question and answer site in a way that will reduce the amount of time you spend looking up answers and asking questions.

In order to best serve this goal, I have planned to talk about specific segments of the site in a way that will be most constructive and beneficial to the way our average user is accessing the site. First, we will visit perhaps the most important piece, navigating the site, because even if we find new areas of this tool, what good is it if we can't search it efficiently for what we need? For answers to questions we don't have posted yet, I will touch on submitting questions and how to do this with enough information and properly selected items that we can potentially answer your question in a single response.

Once we know how to submit questions, we will look back upon our accounts, which is necessary to submit a question, and learn just what all we can set up to help us in the future. Lastly, I will talk about how you can submit your own feedback about our site and our answers in a continuing effort to improve our services to you. Now let's start with taking a look at how to get to the Q&A site, so go to www.qualitynet.org.

The first step in talking about navigating the Q&A site is how to get to it. The most common method of access is through QualityNet.org, but we also have a direct web address of www.cms-ocsq.custhelp.com which will work even during most *QualityNet* maintenance windows. If you are looking for the links on QualityNet.org, look on the right side of the page as displayed here. Whether you are from a hospital outpatient facility or an ambulatory surgical center, your process is going to be same on the next view of the Q&A home screen.

Now that we know how to get here, we can take a look at the home page of the *QualityNet* question and answer site for the Ambulatory Surgical Center and Hospital Outpatient Quality Reporting Programs. As we take a look, we can see there are three primary areas of focus on the screen: navigation, program-specific topics, and the contact us section. One thing I would also like to point out is if we look at the address bar, we are no longer on QualityNet.org.

And this should be a reminder that we should never transmit PHI/PII outside of the QualityNet Secure Portal or other acceptable secure methods of transmission. In our overview of the navigation, we will touch on the last two links – **Ask a Question** and **My Stuff** – towards the end of our session today since they both require an account to access and use.

Now we're going to explore the details of the ASCQR Program as an example of the Q&As available in each and move on to how to search the site more effectively. Over the next several slides, we will see screenshots of these different pages and will take a look at why we want to use the links on these pages and not just go straight to Find an Answer. So, imagine we just selected **Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting** for the purposes of today.

Here we have the Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting category page where can find more information related to ASC-specific topics, called Categories, here. When you are just learning the program or if you aren't quite sure what to search for in an advanced search to find an answer, use the

broader categories on this page to begin refining your search. You could also click on any of the most popular answers down at the bottom of the page, which are generated based on what is getting the most attention and positive feedback from other visitors of the site.

Clicking on any one of these categories – and for today we'll click on **General Information** – will reveal all of the answers that match that category filter. You can view each individual Q&A by clicking on its summary in the right-most column. Additional options for sorting and filtering are also available on this page, but we'll touch on that more when we revisit the search capabilities of the site. For now, we will take notice that we're on the Find an Answer page with some search filters already applied for us. Now let's go back to the Q&A home page to look at our further options for viewing.

The options on the home page include the Hospital Outpatient Quality Reporting Program, like Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting. These two main categories are only able to be found on this site, the Outpatient and the ASC Q&A site, where our next two are on both Outpatient and the Inpatient Q&A site. Public reporting is quickly becoming a larger component of all the quality reporting programs today, and we want to make sure there are a whole set of Q&As available that will stand out and, hopefully, explain how to handle a particular question or problem related to your preview reports, for example.

ASCs will not find much in our last option, but validation is where you go for, yes, all of your validation questions. While the validation option is visible on both Inpatient and Outpatient, like public reporting, the subcategories will be focused on ASC and Hospital Outpatient topics and measures. Now without getting distracted too much, it is important to note that I just talked about the Inpatient Quality Reporting Program on an ASC/OQR webinar. While some of you are scratching your head and thinking, "Okay, he's lost it; he doesn't know what he's talking about," the two sites are actually part of the same system with a smaller set of differences between them as possible. What this means for you is simplified methods of researching because if you do not only report for Hospital Outpatient but also for Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting, these wider options will appear on both sites, and you will be able to take your familiarity with this site and apply it to Hospital Inpatient as well.

Now we continue on to your next section: efficiently searching the question and answer site so that you can find an answer to your question even faster.

Finding an answer is going to be as easy as clicking on the **Find an Answer** tab at the top of the screen in the navigation area. Once we are there, we can start searching by keyword or the filters mentioned here through Advanced Search. Simply type in a particular phrase: for example, if you're a hospital, "ED-Throughput" or if you're an ASC, "General Information" and click **Search**.

Before we take a look at our search results though, we're going to look into the Advanced Search feature. The first thing you should notice is that everything here has been unchanged so far. This is what it looks like when you just click on **Find an Answer**. If you have gotten to this page through clicking on a category under a program – like ASC **General Information** – you would see the category and also likely the product chain in the drop-down menu. Now we will take a closer look at the Advanced Search dialogue box and the features it has available to us.

Search terms are keywords or specific phrases that the search feature will pull all of the answers with matching words/phrases in this box. For a list of specific ways to search in a complex way within this field, click the **Search Tips** link in the upper right of the dialogue box. Here we can see that using a plus sign (+), minus sign (-), and common database characters like asterisk (*) and tilde will allow us to modify our result. In many cases the title for our application might be difficult to use, but the asterisk is absolutely helpful.

Let's take a moment to put this into a realistic scenario. Let's say I want information regarding the OPPS rule, but I don't want anything including ASC in the question or answer text. I would type in OPPS, space, minus sign (-) ASC [OPPS -ASC]. Likewise, I could use the asterisk to find all answers containing any variation of submission by typing in asterisk submission asterisk [*submission*] with no spaces in between. Here we see the visual examples of me typing in the various keywords. I absolutely recommend trying this out for yourself. You never know; you might even be able to use this on other sites and search engines you visit on a regular basis.

Now that we know where and how to input various keywords to manipulate the results we get back, let's take a look at how we can do similar things through drop-down menus. The first two I will cover are visible here, Product and Category. Up until now, we've been using terms like Program, Category, and Topic to describe various segments of the site. Our knowledgebase (another term for our question and answer site), is crafted by looking at

Products, what we call the program – in other words, ASC and HOQR – and then using categories that describe those products.

One thing I want to point out before we go any further though is that categories are defined by the selected products, so, if possible, you should always select it first. So, if I want to learn more about the general requirements for Ambulatory Surgical Center Quality Reporting, I would chose the ASC **Quality Reporting** product and then click the category drop-down and chose **Ambulatory Surgical Center**. But wait, there's a drop-down arrow next to this. So, if we click on the arrow, then we see all the subcategories to Ambulatory Surgical Centers which will further refine our result and make it so that we can actually choose General Information in this scenario. This idea is called "nesting categories," and we will revisit it later on. Keep it in the back of your mind when we talk about submitting your questions.

Our final segment of the Advanced Search screen is the Sort By. We can sort our results by ascending and descending order in regards to the columns that are on that results page. We will also look at sorting from the Results page itself, but for now, just say you clicked **Search** here and continue on. If you clicked **Search** on the current screen, it would bring up the next screen with the current search filters applied. That's a quick overview of the Advanced Search option. Now remember before we got onto Advanced Search, we were saying if you are a hospital you would chose a category, then we chose the example of ED-Throughput. And if you were an ASC, you would choose a category, and we chose General Information. Here we can view our results from a couple of slides back where we used ASC General Information as our Product and Category. At the top of the screenshot, you can see the filters that have been applied, which is good if you came back from lunch and forgot what you were doing. If you don't want to relaunch the search but re-sort the answers that have been returned, you can do so by clicking on any of the column headers at the top -- clicking on it and seeing an up arrow towards that column ascending, and down means descending. To continue on to the next page of results, click the page number or **Next** at the bottom of the results on your screen. Like when we clicked through the categories on the home page to find answers, clicking on the summary will open to the complete Q&A.

Now we will take a look at how to submit questions more effectively and discuss making an account and what fields you need to fill out.

To submit a question, you would click on **Ask a Question** at the top of the screen or under Contact Us, which would bring you to this screen if you have not yet created an account. We are going to go through the account creation process first to show you what that looks like. Now let's take a look at the account creation page by clicking on **Create a New Account**.

To submit a question, you only need these four things on this slide. It's pretty easy. Sure, we ask you for more information, but we are minimizing what we ask you to only retain what is absolutely necessary to answer your question. If you have a question about a specific facility's Claims Detail Report, for example, it is going to make our job a lot easier if you have your NPI or CCN number. If you have not yet created an account, you will need to give us a little bit of information to get you signed in for the first time.

So, let me stop here and clarify something. If you report for both Hospital Inpatient and Outpatient and you've already created an account in the Q&A site for one of them, you do not need to create another account. The one log-in will work on both sites.

Now let's take a look at the account creation page. Going down the list, everything with an asterisk is a required field, so only the password fields are not required. Now you may be thinking, "Harold, I need a password, don't I?" I couldn't agree more; you absolutely should have a password, but we do not actually require it. If you do not want a password associated with your account, you simply leave the two fields blank and fill in everything with an asterisk next to it.

Also, an important note is that user names are cap-sensitive, meaning that if I put a capital in at the beginning of my username above, I'd have to put that in every time I log into the QualityNet Q&A site to submit a question, which brings me to my other reminder. This site does not link to your QualityNet Secure Portal account in any way. The most common log-in issue, after mistyped user names, I find as system administrator is that our visitors are trying to use their *QualityNet* credentials to log in to the Q&A site, which will not work.

Getting back to our screenshot here, we also have to fill in the user type drop-down selection. This one should be pretty self-explanatory, but in the event you are abstracting for both the Inpatient and Outpatient Programs at a hospital, you should simply chose **Hospital.** While your choice here does not

affect your access or what you can see, it helps the subject matter experts, or SMEs, know what perspective you're coming from in your question.

The last three items on the Create Account page ask you for your facility identification information to CMS and are not required. The benefit of providing this information is that it allows us to better address your specific questions, and in doing so, you're helping us reduce the amount of time it takes us to answer your question appropriately. Putting this information in here attaches it to your contact information in the Q&A site. But be aware, it will not be populated on the Ask a Question page. In the future this should be possible, but on the back-end, what our SMEs are using, we can see your account information alongside the question information. If you report for multiple CCNs or NPIs, please use the field on the Ask a Question page, but be aware you will be asked this information every time, and we will not have it if you do not provide it.

Format and description is persistently displayed on the slide of all three fields, so if you aren't sure of what the number is, you can maybe jog your memory or recognize it through our description here. Hospital Outpatient facilities only need to put in their CCN on the top row, and ASCs only need to put in their NPI or CCN. But if both are available, we greatly appreciate receiving those. Now that we have all of that information gathering out of the way, we can move on to submitting a question.

We are once again back at the home page. We have seen this page now a few times. Now that we've created an account, if we already clicked on **Ask a Question**, we will be redirected to the Ask a Question page. But otherwise, you will need to click the **Ask a Question** link, either at the top of the screen in the navigation area or the contact widget on almost any page. Now we'll look at the page itself and begin analyzing it.

Once again, all selections with an asterisk beside them are mandatory fields, so the only field you don't have to fill in in this case is the Reporting Quarter (underneath Category) that is not required to submit the question. The first thing I have to stress, though, is confidentiality and making sure PHI or PII are not transmitted accidentally or intentionally into this Q&A system. I've removed the Attachments option as a way of sending information about a particular case to the support contractor since it was frequently used to send confidential information which would then have to be cleansed from the system.

Moving on, let's take a look at the information we have to fill in. The **Subject** and **Question** fields are the first things we have to fill in, and the easiest way I can describe to complete these are to write it up like an email. Your subject will be your tag line that we see describing what information you're looking for or need, and the question is the body of it all, giving us additional details.

Next, we will talk about the **Product** and **Category** fields, and this should be pretty obvious from our previous mentions of this, but we do have one catch; now we *have* to use the nested categories to their lowest possible value. What that means is I cannot just use ASC Product and ASC Category; I would have to choose a subcategory like General Information. If you do not choose a low enough level, the page will prompt you to select one by highlighting the field in yellow. The last field is **Encounter Date**, and you will fill this in as appropriate to the appropriate encounter date you're asking about. If you do not have a particular encounter date, then just fill it in with the first item on the list and move on.

As we've discussed in the Creating an Account portion of our presentation, if you have multiple CCNs or NPIs and you need to refer to a particular one, please fill out the information on this page for a hospital or ASC, as appropriate. Clicking **Continue** now will allow us to submit this question we have written down, but first we may see a pop-up indicating possible answers to our question. If this does appear for you, please review it. The system looks for your question to determine possible answers that may exist already, saving you the time of awaiting a response.

If your question was not answered by the pop-up screen, then you will come to this page next, indicating your question was received and giving you the reference number of the incident – what the system calls all new questions. You also should nearly simultaneously receive a confirmation email in your inbox. That email should look something like this. Your question is at the bottom, and any responses provided back will have a header in green just like where it says Customer-by-Web Form (Harold Hicks) below.

Now that we know how to submit a question, let's take a look at managing our account. Now we are going to dive into your account management options. We are about to turn the Q&A site from a reactive tool to a proactive one so we can reach out and help you learn more about measures, quality reporting, and even the Final Rule.

Now that we are getting into the account management aspect of the Q&A site, we can start to look at everything you can edit and set up for your account by clicking on **My Stuff** seen here. You can update, review, and change your personal information. You can also modify notification subscriptions all from the My Stuff tab.

Let's take a look at the account overview page which you do need to be logged in to view. This screen is accessible by clicking **My Stuff** directly or just the arrow and clicking **Account Overview** depicted above. We see three primary sections of the account overview from here: questions, settings, and notifications. Questions are your Incidents, or questions submitted for answering. Above, you can see I have submitted four questions in my recently submitted history. You can quickly look over the status of your question from here and open or close it by clicking on the subject of that incident. You can also view all your questions, which is a bit of a misnomer, admittedly, since we only show up to 99 questions on the website for you in order to reduce load times. If, for some reason, you would like to see more, please reach out to me directly via the contact information at the end of this presentation and let me know, and I will be happy to pull a custom list of your questions for you to view and keep.

The next section is **Settings,** and this is where you can update your account page that you created before. You can also add up to two additional email addresses as alternate methods of contact and change your password from here. The last step is **Notifications**, which sends you email notification of answer postings and updates.

We will briefly explore the capabilities of the system and how you can customize notifications to meet your needs and wants. Notifications are set up to send out one hour from the answer being posted or updated by an SME by default, but sometimes these go out even sooner. Notification emails always report by the **Answer** (the system term for a Q&A that's been posted), but the scope of the emails you receive can be much larger or individualized, if desired.

First, we will look at how to set up notifications for an individual answer. If an answer is updated, you will receive an email notification with a link to this answer on the Q&A tool. Subscribing to this type of notification is done by clicking on the **Notify Me** link at the bottom of the page on each answer. This is ideal when you only want to know when a particular Q&A is updated, let's say, something about the Final Rule.

Notification for the Product and Categories functions is primarily the same, but the primary difference is that Products are at the highest level of notification and will email you notifications for every answer related to every category linked to it, where a Category level is varying in its frequency and notifications. A notification could be for ASC Public Reporting, as displayed above, or at a lower level, only general Public Reporting and not Preview Reports. Category notifications give you the most amount of flexibility in choosing what you receive notifications for, and using them effectively will make adding and receiving notifications a much simpler experience for you as a user. You have to select each notification individually, so you can mix and match as desired and view your result after clicking **Add Product** or **Add Category**.

Now let's quickly go over how to submit feedback about the QualityNet Q&A site. All comments are added to a log which is reviewed and used for making the site better. Feedback is a very easy way of sending a message to myself and others to handle making sure the site is running smoothly and effectively for our customers. There have been instances where the feedback section of the site was the only place able to send a notification to the support team, but there was an issue preventing the sending of questions. Some of you might even remember when that happened.

We've improved our testing practices since then as a result, and we continue to pay attention to feedback created through the Give Feedback button on most pages on the site and Contact Us. I have seen feedback used to simply send "I don't like this" messages with no idea how to improve the feature being communicated about. But I want to take something you may dislike about the site and turn it into something you love, possibly even make it your favorite part. While your honest feedback is absolutely appreciated, please tell me what would make it better, so I can turn that dream into a reality. There are not many sites run by *QualityNet* where you have features like this, and I would love to keep it going.

Simply click the Give Feedback option, provide an email – it can be test@test.com if you don't want to be linked or responded to regarding your feedback – and enter your comment. The feedback queue is not monitored as closely as the regular queues for questions, so please remember to keep actual questions going through the Ask a Question page discussed earlier. I read each and every comment submitted. Thanks in advance for your constructive feedback.

Now I will hand this back to Pam to close things up. Thank you for giving me the time to speak to you today about the QualityNet Question and Answer site. Pam?

Pam Harris: Thank you, Harold, that was very informative. Again folks, Harold's contact information is at the end of the slide pack if you need it. Harold, if you don't mind, I'd like to share some questions that have come in. And let me ask you some of these questions so you can answer and kind of elaborate just a little bit.

Okay, Harold. The first question is, "Why are my *QualityNet* credentials not working on the Q&A site?"

Harold Hicks: Hi, Pam. That's a very good question. QualityNet Secure Portal and related sites are actually separate systems from the Question and Answer site. While this has benefits and downsides, the larger benefit is the simplicity of access for the Q&A site. All you need is a name and email address to ask a question, and you do not have to log into your access if you have already posted the Q&As.

Pam Harris: All right, thank you. The next question is, "Why was my account for the Q&A site disabled?"

Harold Hicks: Accounts in the Q&A site are never actually disabled, but the error message that reads, "The username or password you entered is incorrect or your account has been disabled," is actually a generic log-in error message. Simply verify your username is correctly typed and that you have put in the right password. You can also click on the **Forgot Your Username or Password** link below the Log-in button.

Pam Harris: Thanks, Harold. Okay, I've got one more for you. "I didn't receive a password reset email. What do I do?"

Harold Hicks: This one actually happens pretty often, Pam. It actually happens when your username or email is not correct. For security reasons the system does not tell you when you have entered these incorrectly to prevent spammers from getting information about your account. If you are certain, though, that you have entered your username and/or email correctly into the password reset form, then email RightNowAdmin@hsag.com – which is also at the end of this presentation – for assistance from an administrator, and you will receive direct assistance.

Pam Harris: Okay. I've got another one for you, Harold. "I can't see all the questions I have submitted. Why not?"

Harold Hicks: This could be for one of several reasons. The most common of which is that more than one account has been created. For example, let's say your email has changed after a provider has changed from one owner to another. Sometimes this results in an email domain change to reflect the change in ownership. If a new account is created rather than updating the email on the original account, then you will lose all the questions you have asked about previously. Thankfully though, these can be recovered from multiple accounts; simply send a request in to RightNowAdmin@hsag.com to do so. If you think you might have multiple accounts, send an email to RightNowAdmin@hsag.com, and we can assist you directly with recovering your old account information and restoring it to your current account.

Pam Harris: Thank you, Harold, one more question. "I want to send an attachment like I have done in the past. How do I do this?"

Harold Hicks: Sending an attachment was actually disabled back in 2015 in an effort to reduce PHI and PII breaches. And while this has been largely successful as a countermeasure, it does not help you send in information to the SME if you need assistance with a particular scenario and documentation. If you do need that particular assistance, then you should utilize a secure fax line to that SME or another CMS-approved method of transmitting PHI or PII information to your SME. You should request this information from the SME you're working with directly, as it varies.

Pam Harris: Okay, Harold. I just want to clarify, you know, the SME Harold was talking about in the earlier question, that means Subject Matter Expert, okay? And now I think we've got time for one more question, and that is, "Do I need to have multiple accounts if I need to ask questions for the Inpatient and Outpatient Quality Reporting Programs?"

Harold Hicks: All right, Pam. You absolutely do not need to have multiple accounts. You will find it greatly simplified if you just have one account for both the Hospital Outpatient and the Hospital Inpatient Q&A sites. And who doesn't like having less usernames and passwords?

Pam Harris: That's all the time we have today for questions. We appreciate you joining us today. And thank you, Harold, for all the hard work that you've done.