



Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program

Support Contractor

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

Questions & Answers

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Question 1: How often are Q&As updated with recent questions submitted that have been answered?

Q&As are posted based on need, specificity, and if there is already a similar posting. Currently, there is no set time-frame for Q&A release into the site.

Question 2: What was the web address again? CMS.IP.?

The direct address for Inpatient Q&As is <https://cms-ip.custhelp.com/>.

Question 3: Is the feedback form on the main screen?

The feedback form is at <https://cms-ip.custhelp.com/>, on the right-hand side of the screen, under Contact Us.

Question 4: Is it acceptable to use older responses to questions even when I can no longer locate them on the site? I have printed them as references.

There are changes in the specifications manual and in the Final Rule that



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may cause questions that are older to no longer be applicable. So, if you save those questions and answers, please make sure that they correspond to the actual and current specifications manual required for correct abstraction. If the older, saved answers no longer correlate, the response may no longer be accurate. The validity of Q&As depends on whether the data elements and abstraction guidance has changed, so it is best to always use the most current version on the site rather than a downloaded copy.

Question 5: **I feel like we have a lot less access to questions that may have been addressed by another person. For example, (sepsis), many clarifying questions have been asked but when you search on the topic, they are very limited answers. Has something changed?**

Even though we do have a lot of questions submitted, it is not a one-to-one correlation with what we're actually posting on the Q&A site. If, for example, there is a sepsis question with a lot of details about what the particular abstraction is, we aren't necessarily going to want to post that one because it might be misconstrued or extrapolated and then inadvertently invalidate another abstraction. We want to ensure that we are able to assist with your case specific abstraction directly rather than presume that a general Q&A set would address your particular situation.

Question 6: **Can the answers received be used for validation purposes during audits?**

If you fail validation and you have a mismatch of a data element and the failing of validation makes you at risk for losing your Annual Payment Update (APU) and you have to do an APU reconsideration, at that time when you are doing your APU reconsideration, you would be able to submit the Q&A that you received as to why you answered or abstracted the data element as you did with your reconsideration. So, yes you can use your responses for validation purposes.

Question 7: **When I use the select an answer category and click on general abstraction guidelines subcategory, if I search for sepsis within that subcategory, I get no records found. When I then search for sepsis, I continue to get the same message.?**

It sounds like you are searching inside general abstraction, meaning that you are specifically looking inside any answers related to the general



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abstraction category. Actually, all of the sepsis questions and answers should be underneath the sepsis category. So, what you want to do when in the advanced search filter is make sure you choose the product Measures Abstraction and Data Elements. Then, your category should be sepsis. If there are any particular subtopics, go ahead and choose those as well. That would be how to choose the proper filters to get your desired results.

Question 8: Do I need to be affiliated with one CCN to create an account? I am at the organization level and not affiliated with just one CCN.

You do not have to be affiliated with only one CMS Certification Number (CCN) to create an account. The CCN field is actually not a required field to create your account. If you do have multiple CCNs, go ahead and use the CCN fields on the Ask a Question page to fill in the CCN that you are actually asking about. If you are not asking about a specific CCN, but rather all of your CCNs, remember that you don't even have to fill in the CCN field. The CCN field is there to help us help you faster on a particular case for which you may be inquiring.

Question 9: How do we go about if we have a follow-up question that has been answered but needs further clarification regarding the same question?

When dealing with follow-up questions to responses, you can actually follow-up inside that same incident. You can either choose to respond via the same email that the Q&A site is sending you or open the link to respond through the website. So, just hitting reply and putting in your follow-up question, will actually update your question and send a response back to the person who answered you originally. You can update your question an infinite number of times. So, if you do have a follow-up question or something just doesn't quite make sense about a response, go in and update your question. You can do that from the site under My Stuff or via e-mail.

Question 10: Slide 29, find an answer result. What does the updated date column mean?

The updated date column refers to when the answer itself was updated. That means any time that the answer has been edited or updated with the current specifications manual release. So, when you're sorting by the date last updated, you are looking for the most recent answers, which could be the most recently created answer or the most recently edited answer.



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Question 11: If we already have an account, are we going to need to update it?

You do not have to update your account, although we recommend doing so. One of the most common problems is that providers will have multiple accounts because they lost track of the original one, or they didn't keep up with the emails for some reason. So, we do recommend going in and updating your account. However, if the question is in reference to the CCNs, you do not have to update it currently, although it does help if you do.

Question 12: Why are my QualityNet credentials not working on the Q&A site?

The QualityNet Secure Portal and related sites are actually separate systems from the Q&A site. While having two access credentials may have its downside, the main benefit here is the simplicity of access to the Q&A site. All you need is a name and an e-mail address to Ask a Question and you do not have to log in to access the already posted Q&As. The QualityNet Secure Portal requires a much higher security threshold given the confidentiality of information transferred therein.

Question 13: Why was my account for the Q&A site disabled?

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 login error message. Simply verify your username is correctly typed, including capital letters, and that you have put in the right password. You can also click on the "forgot your username or password" link below the login button.

Question 14: I didn't receive a password reset e-mail. What do I do?

This one actually happens when your username or email are not correct. For security reasons, the system does not tell you when you have entered these incorrectly. This is to prevent scammers from getting information about your account. If you are certain that you have entered your username and or email correctly, then email rightnowadmin@hsag.com for assistance from an administrator, and you will be contacted for direct assistance.



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Question 15: Why are not all Q&As submitted posted on the Q&A site?

Many of the Q&As submitted are actually duplicates of each other and not necessarily appropriate to put up if, for example, they are limited in scope to a very particular case. So, every Q&A that we do post is done based on the need, the value it provides to our users, and under the guidelines that are set by the specifications manual. That way we can provide the most accurate information possible.

Question 16: When I access the notifications page, there is not a button to access to answer notifications page?

The reasoning is that answer notifications are separate from the product and topic notifications or category notifications. Specific answer pages house the answer notification option. Simply scroll all the way down to the bottom of a specific Q&A to find the link with a plus sign to subscribe to that particular notification. When you click on that, it will subscribe your account automatically to notifications that pertain to that particular answer. You can unsubscribe from notifications by going into your notifications page under my stuff.

Question 17: Why do I keep getting an “unknown login error” or “error submitting questions” pop-up when I try to log in or submit a question?

The common culprit for issues like this one is the blocking of scripts on the website. This usually happens due to systems accommodating higher levels of security for many hospitals. To help address these issues, we have an answer posted on the Q&A site https://cms-ip.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/163137. If that answer does not resolve the issue, please contact rightnowadmin@hsag.com.

Question 18: Where do I find sepsis questions?

Sepsis is not where it used to be under the Inpatient Quality Reporting section of the site since it was remodeled in November of last year. You can find sepsis under Measure Abstraction and Data Elements. This now allows us to condense a lot of the varying bits of information and categorize them based on what they are actually related to. So, when you're going to find a question, you want to look under the Measure Abstraction and Data Elements homepage. If you are trying to submit a



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question about sepsis, you want to choose the product first. You are going to trim down the options available for category/topic. So, you want to make sure you choose Measure Abstraction and Data Elements under the product. Then, underneath there, you choose sepsis and then the subtopic that best fits that category and your question.

Question 19: Why would I use a product notification versus a category notification?

A product notification is something that is going to be a lot larger in its scope than a category notification. A product notification could be covering something as large as the IQR Program itself, encompassing all the categories linked to it. However, if you just choose a category level notification, such as public reporting or structural measures DACA, then we could receive notifications for just those particular categories. So, if you are not, for example, interested in eCQMs, but do want to include structural measures Q&As, then we can specify that those types of answers are sent to our email rather than getting everything and having to sift through the entire set.

Question 20: Are the answers posted for core measures considered the most current guidelines for abstraction and should be used in all abstractions?

It depends on when the question was submitted and what version of the manual is being abstracted. As such, some of the posted answers may not be addressing the most current guidelines.

Question 21: Did I understand correctly? Only 99 questions remain on the site. You are not able to see answers to questions >99?

You are able to see answers to more than 99 Q&As, but you are not able to view more than 99 of your own submitted questions. This relates back to the difference between the posted Q&As and the incidents or questions that are submitted. If you need to view all of your submitted questions, reach out to RightNowAdmin@hsag.com for direct assistance in getting a list of your submitted questions and the responses.

Question 22: The questions and answers for Sepsis especially can be pertinent and apply to several different hospitals because there are many different anomalies. Can all the Q&As be released?



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The technical answer here is yes, all Q&As can be released, but most still are not. The ability to view responses and thoughts on certain topics from all questions is something that CMS is interested in making available. A community forum is being researched and planned to be an extension of the Q&A site, with no dates or additional details determined at this time.

Question 23: **There are times when the same questions asked by different participants' result in different answers. Are the answers that are posted in "find an answer" filtered to eliminate these contradictions?**

This is one of the reasons not all Q&As are released, as the exact situation for one case might be misconstrued as a contraindication for another. While answers are not exactly "filtered" for this, we do not post exact examples for this reason. So, in effect, some filtering considerations are in place for posting.

Question 24: **What is the correct process to send comments to CMS about data element definitions/concerns? Mine would be on SEP 1?**

If you have comments, concerns, or questions related to the data element definitions, please submit it on the Ask a Question page. Choose Measure Abstraction and Data Elements as the Product, and then sepsis (or the measure set that comment is related to), as well as a sub-category for the Category/Topic choice.

Question 25: **What was the address to provide feedback anonymously? Did I hear: test@test.com?**

Yes, we recommend using the test email or even the rightnowadmin@hsag.com email, if you wish to provide anonymous feedback.

Question 26: **Who is answering the questions in the Q&A Tool? Is it the QualityNet Help Desk?**

There are several groups working together to answer your questions. These include the Hospital Quality Reporting Support Contractors, QualityNet HelpDesk, the Measure Writers, and in some cases CMS itself provides direct input.



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Question 27: Why does it sometimes take weeks to get an answer to my question?

The time it takes for a response to be given varies due to a number of factors. Sometimes when we get a question it is routed incorrectly because it is reliant on your Product/Category selections on the Ask a Question page. When this happens, we have to manually transfer it to the correct group, based on our interpretation of your question. Other times, the response takes a while because of the time necessary to get the appropriate subject matter experts to view and research the question. Most questions are responded to very quickly, and we do strive to respond within two business days whenever possible.

Question 28: Will all the Q&A be entered into QualityNet sometime?

There are no current plans to post all of the questions submitted to the Q&A site at this time. This is for many reasons and not limited to just avoiding duplicate questions. We are considering posting more frequent Q&As based on the type of questions, and are developing a review and editing process to do so. We recognize that many providers would like to see their questions and others posted more often. Our aim is to maintain the accuracy and completeness of the knowledge-base Q&As. Stay tuned for more!