



# THRIVING UNDER QAPI

FINDING OPPORTUNITIES  
THROUGH A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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**A**s Reliance Healthcare moved to strengthen its quality improvement program over the last year, the Arkansas-based skilled nursing provider turned to a familiar partner.

McKesson's Quality One™, an innovative, web-based management platform, was already in use as the company's go-to for mock surveys and internal quality-assurance efforts.

But with the full rollout of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) requirements in late 2017, MDS expert Barbara Matheson took a closer look at everything Quality One offers.

"Before, we would take our trigger areas and have our facilities create their own written plans. There was no consistency," says Matheson, RN, RAC-CT, a Medicare/MDS consultant with LTC Systems, a Reliance affiliate. "I really like how Quality One guides you through the QAPI plan process. It's streamlined it for us."

The majority of Reliance's 40-plus facilities are now operating with Quality One, and the rest are expected to come on board in 2019.

### QUALITY IMPROVEMENT MINDSET

More providers are looking for software solutions as QAPI advances, a recognition of both the program's stringent requirements and its comprehensive focus on patient outcomes. But the data needed to drive quality improvement can be overwhelming, especially in facilities used to looking for patterns amid piles of paperwork.

Quality One seeks to provide survey readiness, helping to detect and potentially prevent negative clinical surprises, as well as the financial penalties that may come along with them. The goal is to deliver the best possible information to shape a building's QAPI strategies — and deliver results.

The dashboard-based design provides an intuitive way to ensure employees are working with a quality improvement mindset, one that is guided at every turn by a combination of data and feedback.

"It really is so easy to use because it was developed by clinicians, for clinicians," says Patricia Howell, RN, BSN, clinical support specialist for McKesson. "As you collect data, it takes the bias out of your processes. Sometimes, we tend to make assumptions. It's especially easy to do that when you're working on paper. But with Quality One, you've got the whole loop closed, and you're able to see it all in front of you."

### QAPI 'MUSTS'

CMS says a successful QAPI plan must have five elements:

1. A design and scope that is ongoing, with comprehensive efforts that focus on quality and safety in the areas of clinical care, quality of life and resident choice;
2. A well-established governing body that oversees initiatives and drives a culture of improvement;
3. Feedback, data systems and monitoring that draw data from multiple sources using performance indicators;
4. At least one Performance

Improvement Project (PIP) that addresses a facility-specific problem; and

5. Systematic analysis and systemic action, featuring a “highly organized, structured approach,” including the ability to use root cause analysis to determine factors contributing to less-than-ideal outcomes.

Quality One serves as a baseline to determine current organizational performance.

In its QAPI guidance, CMS has said, “Without a baseline or point of comparison, it is hard to judge your own performance. A strong approach to quality management ... uses performance indicators to monitor a wide range of care processes and outcomes.”

## BIG PICTURE, LASER FOCUS

With its ability to process thousands of data points quickly, Quality One can recognize small problems before they become major ones. It can look at big-picture data and identify project-specific trends.

More importantly, Quality One combines the power of data analytics with human insights, delivering prompts to help facilities assess their weaknesses, develop solutions to address them and set and meet goals for improvement.

“It’s great to have data and tracking capabilities, but true improvement really has to start with the governing body, and leadership — fostering and supporting a quality foundation and guiding principles,” says Lisa Thomson, chief strategy and marketing officer for Pathway Health Services, a consulting firm that helped develop Quality One. “It really builds the changing culture of your organization, walks you through



**Quality One looks at broad data to identify project-specific needs.**

engaging your staff in the process and helps you look at your organization as a whole.”

Included are self-assessment and quality plan templates; strategies for systems thinking; information to feed the QAPI committee’s root cause analysis; ways to identify possible PIPs; and the ability to customize your Performance Improvement Projects utilizing organization data, such as Interventions to Reduce Acute Care Transfers (INTERACT), to support your quality improvement plan.”

**“THE BEAUTY OF THIS TOOL IS I CAN DO THAT FULL-BLUSH LOOK BACK OR DRILL IT DOWN TO SOME TARGETED POINTS.”**

Providers can use Quality One as often as they like, inputting information from informal surveys on a weekly or quarterly basis or referencing and updating PIP data as staff time allows.

They can easily print reports or garner positive feedback from residents to use for strategic initiatives outside of QAPI, adds Patti Baicy, RN, director of McKesson’s clinical resource team. There is also a Quality Plan Template available for use or for providers to compare to their current Quality Plans.

## FLEXING FOR NEW REQUIREMENTS

Pathway’s Jeanne Carlson has been involved with Quality One nearly since its inception and ferried it through revisions to correlate with a new survey process and quality measurement changes. Flexibility — and customization — have always been hallmarks.



Data analysis features in Quality One help providers engage team members cross-sectionally.

“You can slice and dice in many different ways and show the areas of most significant concern for you at the top of the page,” explains Carlson, who is responsible for partner programs like Quality One. “That provides some initial prioritizing, but then you meet as a team to see which one to address or if there are new concerns. It’s a great way to bring in your front line staff. A dietary aide or someone in housekeeping may be great to involve in your QAPI. They may be terrific interviewing residents and recording those comments in Quality One.”

### OBSERVE, MEASURE, SUCCEED

Clinical input and observations are also an important part of the mix, as are evaluations of whether improvement efforts would be measurable and actionable.

Quality One is designed to be responsive, with regular updates to reflect changes in the State Operations Manual or to meet the desires of users. For Reliance, McKesson developed a way to capture potentially negative feedback from residents and their loved ones in an easy-to-read report. Matheson said that was a great addition to the system’s existing feature of identifying potential F-Tag violations and ranking them from highest to lowest risk.

“As an operator, that flexibility is key,” Thomson said. “I want the ability to look at my facility aside from some canned product, to prepare for changes I have to make. The beauty of this tool is I can do that full-blush look back or drill it down to some targeted points.”

Facilities that choose to tackle multiple Performance Improvement Projects concurrently also have the option of reviewing data in batches, such as targeting data relevant to fall-prevention, weight-loss or pain management goals one at a time.

Moving forward, every facility in the country should be ready to demonstrate that it has developed QAPI plans using all five elements. A management tool like Quality One can help ease the burden and make sure the rationale for the work remains front and center.

“Data analysis and quality performance are really what’s driving our organizations today,” Thomson says. “The important thing is bringing data into a tool that can engage a team cross-sectionally, to really look at the changes you can control and then build a plan around shared priorities to successfully impact quality outcomes for the resident. That’s the reason we’re all here in the first place.” ■

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## Introducing relief for survey and QAPI stress.

### Discover and diagnose quality assurance challenges with McKesson Quality One™

It goes beyond the survey process to meet your facility's evolving quality and regulatory compliance needs. Powered by Pathway Health, this innovative, web-based tool allows you to diagnose quality issues you may have so you can correct them. It's a different approach to quality that takes the stress and anxiety out of the survey process and QAPI development.

Ready to get started?

Learn more or sign up for a McKesson Quality One™ demo at [mms.mckesson.com/mckesson-quality-one](https://mms.mckesson.com/mckesson-quality-one).