**ECMS - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**

Many quality measures that have been tested and validated are being used by CMS, which also encourages others to use these measures as well. CMS has data stratified by population, type of healthcare setting, and diseases, yet there are still many gaps in these quality measures. Those in the healthcare system continue to work on improving quality measures because of the complex healthcare system (CMS, 2014).

Although there are gaps in quality measures, CMS continues to be a leader in measuring quality, public reporting of healthcare data, working to improve measures, and attempting to reduce the amount of burden with data collection and reporting. CMS partners with other organizations to improve quality care such as the American Medical Association (AMA), the AQA Alliance, The Joint Commission (TJC), the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA), the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), the National Quality Forum (NQF), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and other governmental agencies. Other agencies that focus on specific populations such as pediatrics have collaborated with CMS as well to help improve quality measures (Lighter & Fair, 2004).

## The Joint Commission (TJC)

TJC is an accrediting agency that promotes performance improvement though certain measures. They developed their first measurement system, ORYX, in 1995. This system allowed certain data to be submitted to the agency and later validated, analyzed, and reported. TJC has also worked closely with CMS and other organizations to encourage voluntarily reporting data on certain quality measures (TJC, 2014).

Summary

External regulatory agencies license and monitor healthcare organizations and those involved. They assure that these facilities are providing quality care while also protecting patients from any further harm. While some licensing agencies are a requirement to participate in, others are not; however, it may be beneficial for hospitals to participate depending on the agency's incentives.

Data from different healthcare organizations are publicly reported and published for others to use and compare. The data does not necessarily show a straightforward message; instead, more of a relationship between data must be analyzed and interpreted with caution. The measures and tools that hospitals use help track their performance and help them move towards their objective so that they can achieve goals at their benchmark or higher. This makes standardization important so that published data can be comparable.