
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Medicare Beneficiaries:

What to do if you have a concern about care you received while on Medicare

What is a Beneficiary and Family Centered Quality Improvement Organization (BFCC-QIO)?

BFCC-QIOs are organizations that are available to help you and your representative or family caregiver with questions or concerns such as:

- Am I ready to be discharged from the hospital? Maybe I am being discharged too soon.
- Should I be receiving needed skilled services, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy or hospice services from a home health agency, skilled nursing facility, hospice or comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facility?
- I am concerned about the quality of care I received from my hospital, doctor, nurse or others.

Medicare has changed the QIO Program to ensure that your needs are better met. Under the new program, BFCC-QIOs (described above) review beneficiary and family concerns. It also gives regional QIOs, called Quality Innovation Networks (QIN-QIOs), the job of helping hospitals and doctors with their quality improvement activities.

BFCC-QIOs will handle all discharge appeals and quality of care reviews to ensure you are ready for discharge and that your care meets recognized standards of care.

How do I contact my BFCC-QIO?

To get the address and phone number of the BFCC-QIO for your state or territory:

- Visit <http://www.qioprogram.org> for a list of current BFCC-QIOs and their contact information.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to obtain information for the BFCC-QIO in your area. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

What can a BFCC-QIO do if I have a concern about care I received while on Medicare?

One of the responsibilities of BFCC-QIOs is to look at the quality of medical care that Medicare beneficiaries receive. First, the BFCC-QIO will decide

if your concerns will be handled through “Immediate Advocacy” (described on the next page), or through a formal quality of care review process. If a formal review is suggested, your BFCC-QIO will help you complete the paperwork about your concerns so that your complaint can be reviewed.

What will happen after I contact my BFCC-QIO?

If you make a formal quality of care complaint, your BFCC-QIO will request your medical records and forward them to a practicing doctor who works for the BFCC-QIO. This doctor will independently review your medical records, look at all aspects of the care you received and speak with the medical professionals involved in your care. Depending on the BFCC-QIO doctor’s findings, the BFCC-QIO will decide how to address and resolve the complaint.

What is a medical record review?

Medical record review is when the doctor working for the BFCC-QIO reviews your medical record to determine if your complaint can or should be addressed. Your doctor or health care provider mailed a copy of your medical record to the reviewer. After this review, the BFCC-QIO doctor speaks with the medical professionals involved in your care to better understand your care.

What concerns can my BFCC-QIO address?

Examples of quality of care concerns that your BFCC-QIO can address are:

- Medication errors (such as a wrong drug was given to you).
- Unnecessary or inappropriate surgery or treatment.
- Changes in your condition that were not treated.
- A discharge from the hospital that occurred too soon.
- Incomplete discharge instructions and/or arrangements.

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Quality Improvement Organization Program

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What will happen if the BFCC-QIO determines that the care I received did not meet professionally-recognized standards?

The purpose of the BFCC-QIO review is to help doctors and health care providers improve the future care they give to people with Medicare. Except in the most serious situations, the purpose of a medical review isn't to penalize or punish your doctor, hospital or other health care providers.

The BFCC-QIO will tell you if the care you received met all professionally-recognized standards of health care. If the care you received did not meet professionally-recognized standards, the BFCC-QIO can explore other methods to resolve your complaint such as:

- Notify a provider that care didn't meet these standards.
- Require the provider to take a class or have more training.
- Forward your concern to the QIN-QIO which works with hospitals and doctors to help them with their quality improvement activities.
- Send the BFCC-QIO's findings to the proper state agency.
- Examine more medical records of other Medicare beneficiaries to see if there are other quality of care concerns.

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What other methods might my BFCC-QIO offer to resolve my complaint?

The BFCC-QIO might offer Immediate Advocacy to resolve your complaint.

What is Immediate Advocacy?

Immediate Advocacy is an informal process the BFCC-QIO uses to quickly resolve a verbal complaint.

This process begins when you or your representative agree to it (verbal consent). At this point, the BFCC-QIO immediately contacts your doctor or health practitioner directly on your behalf. You may discontinue Immediate Advocacy at any time. The goals of Immediate Advocacy are to:

- Use a flexible approach to resolving complaints in situations that are not suitable for the traditional case review process.
- Increase beneficiary and provider/practitioner satisfaction.
- Efficiently resolve complaints/concerns.

Where can I get help if I have a concern about a doctor?

If you have a concern about a doctor, such as unprofessional conduct, incompetent practice or licensing questions, you may contact the hospital directly or your state medical board.

Where can I get help if I have a concern about conditions at a hospital?

If you have a concern about conditions at a hospital, such as rooms too hot or too cold, cold food, or poor housekeeping, you may contact the hospital directly or your state department of health services.

Where can I get help if I have a concern about the quality of care for services not covered by Medicare?

If you have a concern about the quality of care for services that Medicare doesn't cover, such as services in an assisted living facility, adult day care, or hospice agency not related to Medicare, contact your state department of aging.

Where can I get help if I have a concern about billing?

If you have a concern about billing, such as questions about charges and what Medicare does or does not cover, contact 1-800-MEDICARE.

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