

**RHEUMATOLOGY QUALITY STAKEHOLDERS' SUMMIT**  
**SEPTEMBER 20, 2007 ♦ WASHINGTON, DC**

**MEETING REPORT**

The American College of Rheumatology (ACR) convened the second annual Rheumatology Quality Stakeholders' Summit on September 20 in Washington, DC. The Summit is a meeting of key stakeholders that focuses on strategic directions for quality initiatives that involve rheumatology. The purpose of the Summit was to create interaction among the various quality communities represented, share information, generate ideas that would help bridge past projects with current and future activities, determine opportunities for collaboration, and ultimately set a strategy for moving forward together.

While one of the goals for the Summit included interactivity among the participants, the meeting was didactic in nature and extremely informative with regard to the presentation of high-level information. Several outstanding speakers from organizations such as the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), Bridges to Excellence (BTE), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), the National Quality Forum (NQF), and RAND presented to an audience of 55 private practitioners, payors, industry representatives, government agencies and other healthcare organizations with an investment in the quality movement as it relates to rheumatology.

Presentations centered on how quality issues were being addressed and implemented in a variety of arenas including recertification / education, reimbursement, and employer healthcare plans. In addition, medical directors from insurers provided an overview of their company programs aimed at improving the quality of patient care while also controlling costs, including the identification of physicians who meet quality standards and the measures by which those physicians are ranked.

Future directions for the quality movement will likely focus on defining ways to measure patient outcomes; development and implementation of efficiency measures; reduction of non-essential medical care costs; and development of tools for implementing measurement more efficiently into daily practice. An important point of the evolving quality landscape includes the shift of perspective in addressing and changing the national healthcare system and health plans in a way that is beneficial and sustainable for multiple stakeholders.

The Summit concluded with a demonstration of the ACR's Rheumatology Clinical Registry (RCR), a point-of-care clinical data management tool based on evidence-based quality measures aimed at improving care and drug safety for patients with rheumatic diseases. The RCR is still in development but will ultimately satisfy PQRI reporting requirements and be interoperable with the ACR practice improvement modules and multiple EMRs.

The summit was well-received by attendees; it provided an open forum to discuss collaboration, share information and ultimately identify ways to help improve the quality of care for patients with rheumatic diseases. National quality organizations were enthusiastic about the ACR's progress and involvement with measures development and implementation and encouraged the ACR to continue as a leader in the quality movement.

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55 attendees from the following organizations attended the Summit:

- American College of Rheumatology (ACR)
- Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals (ARHP)
- American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM)
- Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ)
- AMA Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Arthritis Foundation (AF)
- Bridges to Excellence (BTE)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS)
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital
- NIAMS
- National Quality Forum (NQF)
- Outcome Sciences, Inc.
- RAND
- Insurance companies / organizations
  - Anthem BlueCross and BlueShield
  - EBM Connect - Ingenix
  - Kaiser Permanente
  - United Healthcare (UHC)
  - WellPoint, Inc.
- Pharmaceutical companies
  - Bristol Myers Squibb
  - Genentech
  - Merck & Co.
  - Roche Laboratories
  - Wyeth Pharmaceuticals