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Our Commitment to Health Equity Remains Central

Like many of you, I read with alarm that the CDC removed terminology, data and resources related to equity from its website, part of the broader effort to remove diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in federal government.

The Quality Institute began 27 years ago during a renaissance of nonpartisan, nonpolitical thought leadership focused on the need to fundamentally change our health care system. Too many people were dying or harmed from preventable errors. The work, led by the Institute of Medicine, started with the report [To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System](#). Next came [Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century](#). The central argument of the second report is that we need to fundamentally reform health care “to ensure that all Americans receive care that is safe, effective, patient centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.”

These reports have driven much of the work that has gone on to increase transparency on safety; to develop measures to track and report quality; and to collect data to determine progress and identify where there may be progress for some groups but not others. These efforts work toward the creation of a higher quality, safer health system for everyone...



[Read Full Story](#)

TAKE FIVE INTERVIEW

Joshua Ardise, MD, MPH, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, *Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey*



Interviews with members, influencers, and noteworthy people

[Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield New Jersey](#) is a member of the Quality Institute's Leadership Council.

Interview Sneak Peek: *What are the main interventions you are taking to address the top health issues you see across Horizon's adult membership?*

In 2025, Horizon is focused on [affordability](#). We understand how challenging managing rising health care costs can be. That's why, as New Jersey's largest health insurer, we are committed to addressing those challenges and ensuring that quality health care remains accessible to all. One area of focus is helping our members get the right care, at the right time, and in the right place. We ask physicians to provide clinical background as to why they're performing a procedure in a hospital outpatient setting instead of an ambulatory surgery center (ASC). We know that care can cost about 50 percent more in a hospital and patients pay more out of their pockets for that care as opposed to care in an ASC. This will reduce costs and may help reduce patients' medical debt.

Focusing on managing the rising cost of prescription drugs is critical given the robust pipeline of high-cost, specialty drugs. We have a series of targeted programs including robust utilization and formulary management to promote use of the most cost-effective medications, including generic and biosimilar drugs. Horizon also deploys drug transparency tools to empower members to make informed decisions on their prescription drugs. We also go beyond traditional health plan actions. For example, we co-funded [adult fitness parks](#). The first one recently opened in Manahawkin and several others are slated to open in 2025. They are free and open to the public. Exercise, lifestyle changes, and diet are part of a comprehensive approach to combatting obesity...

[Read Full Interview](#)



INCREASE NJ MEDICAID RATES FOR PRIMARY CARE

The Quality Institute, with over 20 other organizations and individuals, is calling upon New Jersey Medicaid to properly fund and reimburse for primary care. Our letter is [here](#). To have a functioning health care system - one that provides preventive care and keeps people healthy - New Jersey Medicaid must adequately pay for primary care.

Please sign onto our letter and join us in this call to increase rates for primary care, which is currently among the lowest in country and on average is half of Medicare rates. While we know that there may be drastic cuts to Medicaid funding at the federal level, that is even more reason to ensure that New Jersey strengthens primary care, which is the foundation of a high value, well-functioning health care system.

If you'd like to sign onto the letter, please send your name, title, and with authority, organization name to tminniear@njhcqi.org.

[Read the Letter](#)



Please join the Quality Institute on **Wednesday, March 5, 8 – 9:30 a.m.**, for an **in-person** Member Breakfast and Engagement Event at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, 230 E. Ridgewood Ave., Paramus.

Start your morning with a quick breakfast while networking with local leaders and health care decision makers. Hear brief updates from Quality Institute staff about how to get involved in our policy, quality improvement, and community health work.

Register today to maximize your membership value.

**This event is for members and invited guests only.*

[Register Now for the 3/5 Event](#)

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING - REGISTER NOW



[How Chronic Underinvestment in Primary Care Is Failing US Patients: 2025 Health of US Primary Care Scorecard Webinar](#)

[Register for Milbank 2/18 Webinar](#)



For information on how to join, please contact Virginia Tesser at vtesser@njhcqi.org.

To learn more about our current initiatives, please visit our website at www.njhcqi.org.

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