While physician anesthesiologists continue to submit Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) data under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality Payment Program, some anesthesia practices are going beyond just submitting data to meet CMS requirements and are also becoming more efficient in local quality improvement processes, too.

Practices and physician anesthesiologists submitting data through Quality Concierge® of the Anesthesia Quality Institute's (AQI's) National Anesthesia Clinical Outcomes Registry (NACOR) are finding they can use the data for business development, hospital performance goals and managed care contracts.

AQI's collaboration with ePreop (Seal Beach, California) to offer Quality Concierge helps practices successfully submit data to NACOR and prepare for value-based payment models in the future. Quality Concierge is beneficial for all practices, but it is ideal for mid- to smaller-sized practices that lack the internal infrastructure to support quality measures collection or submission.

"At the end of the day, practices are using the registry to measure what they believe is important in their practices," says Alexander A. Hannenberg, M.D., ASA Interim Chief Quality Officer. “Quality Concierge is stepping in and filling a void."

When Oregon Anesthesiology Group enrolled in Quality Concierge in early 2016, the 283-member practice had used a paper survey for reporting quality. The shift to Quality Concierge allows the practice to capture more cases in an easier manner, says Eric B. Hansen, M.D., Director of Clinical Quality.

"No one has to track down a paper," Dr. Hansen says. “Even if MIPS was going away, we would still be interested in collecting data. Having this system in place maximizes good outcomes and reinforces good processes."

Quality Concierge's tracking and reporting tools measure compliance across the entire perioperative continuum. Real-time provider and administrative dashboards help generate data and allow physicians to document practice improvement activities.

For a practice that has 170,000 cases a year, reporting through Quality Concierge helps with patient safety, Dr. Hansen says. "We have a better understanding of what contributed to an adverse event," he says. “Quality Concierge is reinforcing good practice patterns and reducing adverse outcomes."

At Green Bay Anesthesia Associates, adopting an electronic anesthesia record with Quality Concierge made data collection easier, says Quality and Safety Officer Neil Gillespie, M.D. The practice is using ePreop imbedded into the EPIC anesthesia module.

“The physician anesthesiologist can document a routine case in 30 seconds or less,” Dr. Gillespie says. “Any adverse outcomes are also immediately available for ease of documentation. Secure sign-on and patient demographic data are all handled behind the scenes.”

After success with physician anesthesiologists, the practice approached PACU nurses who replaced an inconvenient paper-based reporting process with ePreop embedded in their Epic module. The practice now has data from the entire PACU stay.

Over the years, ePreop has secured deep integrations with the largest EHR vendors on the market, including Cerner, Epic, Allscripts and Meditech. Over the past two years, ePreop has expanded its relationship with Cerner to incorporate its platform into the standard workflow for both quality improvement and surgical care coordination and has more deeply integrated with Epic to facilitate reporting requirements and produce a much richer data set, while enabling clinical decision support at the point of care.
Value of Registry Reporting

Practices participating in Quality Concierge are finding the data they are reporting for MIPS are making an impact on day-to-day operations. Submitting the data has the potential to facilitate quality measurement and benchmarking.

Quality reporting can help practices demonstrate quality and value metrics for managed care contracts and health care purchasers. The data also can be used to renew hospital contracts and develop business opportunities, such as outpatient surgery centers. "Hospital administrators are making a judgement and asking, "Did the physician anesthesiologist deliver quality care?"" Dr. Hannenberg says. "For most practices, it is valuable to have benchmarks on performance and knowing where there are opportunities for improvement." At Green Bay Anesthesia Associates, adopting an electronic anesthesia record with Quality Concierge allowed the practice to monitor and improve care. With individual provider data, the practice has discovered strengths and shares best practice information, so all patients benefit.

"These quality tools give us the knowledge needed to fine-tune our practice for a safer and better patient experience," Dr. Gillespie says. "It also gives us the data needed to show our excellence to hospital administrators and insurance companies. We all do excellent work, but it is very important in our current business climate to be able to show that success in data."

Dr. Hansen agrees. With physician anesthesiologists practicing at 12 hospitals in his system and 50 outpatient centers, demonstrating value is important. "Our relationships with the hospitals are helped by the fact that we are pulling data from the ASA quality registry," Dr. Hansen says. "It creates an environment of uniform data collection."

Reporting through Quality Concierge also will help physician anesthesiologists meet Maintenance of Certification requirements and build better clinical processes and improved clinical outcomes, Dr. Hannenberg says.

"Identifying priority areas to employ quality improvement tools comes from managing registries and looking at registry data," Dr. Hannenberg says.

For Drs. Gillespie and Hansen, using Quality Concierge in the practice setting allows physician anesthesiologists to benchmark patient outcomes, professional performance and care processes against other physician anesthesiologists across the country. Quality Concierge captures the continuum of care from the patient’s initial visit through recovery, collecting data that has endless possibilities.