



Quality Connect is a monthly newsletter from Stratis Health designed to support your critical access hospital (CAH), providing updates and resources related to quality reporting and improvement efforts. To share your feedback or request to have another team member added to the list, please contact Jodi Winters – jwinters@stratishealth.org.

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Reporting Reminders/Updates

Upcoming Reporting Deadlines

- Antibiotic Stewardship CY 2025 due by March 1, 2026 (via NHSN)
- Safe Use of Opioids CY 2025 due by March 2, 2026 (via HQR)
- HCAHPS Q4 2025 due by April 8, 2026 (via HQR)
- EDTC Q1 2026 due by April 30, 2026 (via MHA Portal)
- OP-18 Q4 2025 due by May 1, 2026 (via HQR)
- OP-22 CY 2025 due by May 15, 2026 (via HQR)
- HCP Q4 2025-Q1 2026 due by May 15, 2026 (via NHSN)
- Population and Sampling is optional but encouraged

For more information on submitting MBQIP measures, refer to the [MBQIP Minnesota Quality Reporting Guide](#). Additionally, consult the [MBQIP Core Measure Set and Data Submission Deadlines](#) for upcoming submission deadlines, now updated to reflect reporting for Q3 2025 through Q2 2026.

Resources

National Healthcare Safety Network Annual Facility Survey – Due March 1

Reporting for the MBQIP Antibiotic Stewardship measure requires completion of the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) Annual Facility Survey. The survey opens near the beginning of the calendar year and must be completed by March 1. Instructions for submitting the survey are detailed in the [MBQIP Minnesota Quality Reporting Guide](#). Hospitals are strongly encouraged to gather the required answers for the survey in advance of submission, referring to a copy of the survey and instructions for completion available on the [Annual Surveys, Locations & Monthly Reporting | PSC | NHSN | CDC](#) webpage under the heading Acute Care Hospitals.

Overall Hospital Star Rating Preview Period – Now Open

Your hospital's April 2026 Overall Star Rating Hospital-Specific Report (HSR) is available in the Hospital Quality Reporting (HQR) system. The April 2026 preview period occurs from **February 19, 2026**, through **March 20, 2026**. The preview period is **not** a Review and Corrections period, during which hospitals can resubmit corrected data. The April 2026 Overall Star Ratings were calculated using the measure data from the October 2025 refresh. For more information, including how to access your report, [see the announcement on QualityNet](#).

Please note:

- There is a likelihood that more Minnesota CAHs will receive a Star Rating this year due to the inclusion of the Hybrid Mortality measure.
- OAS CAHPS (Outpatient and Ambulatory Surgery Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) is also being incorporated. This won't affect the threshold for inclusion in the Star Ratings but may affect calculations for those who meet the threshold and participate in OAS CAHPS.

Minnesota Rural Health Transformation Program Updates

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (ORPHC) continues to make progress on implementation plans for the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). They received the notice of award for our first year of funding and are working on the distribution plan with valuable input from partners and stakeholders. While funding has been awarded, the funds are currently restricted. ORHPC is working closely with the program's funder, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and is hopeful that funds will be released shortly so it can begin posting notices of funding opportunities.

Over the next few months, these funding opportunities will allow Minnesota providers and stakeholders to act on the strategic initiatives included in our RHTP plan for Minnesota, including:

- Community-based preventive care and chronic disease management.
- Recruiting and retaining talent in rural communities.
- Sustaining access to services to keep care closer to home.
Creating regional care models to improve whole-person health.
- Investing in technology, infrastructure, and collaboration for financial viability.

To stay up to date on Minnesota's Rural Health Transformation Program activities, visit [Rural Health Transformation Plan - MN Dept. of Health](#) and join the subscriber list at the top of the page.

Upcoming Events

MBIQIP Open Call for MN CAHs | April 8, 2026, 1-2 p.m. CT

[Register](#)

Stratis Health hosts open discussion calls for Minnesota CAHs to support CAHs in submitting data for core MBQIP measures, sharing promising practices with other CAHs, and having a chance to ask questions of Stratis Health staff and each other. CAHs are encouraged to review their MBQIP reports before the calls and to come with questions.

Additional 2026 calls and registration, as well as past calls, [can be found on the Stratis Health website](#).

Expert to Expert eCQM Annual Update Webinars

Register now to attend Expert to Expert webinars offered in collaboration by the Joint Commission, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and eCQM stewards. The webinars address the eCQM Annual Updates for 2026 implementation and offer CE credit for the live broadcast. Frequently asked questions will be addressed, and the audience can submit questions for response during a Q&A segment. Slides, Recordings, and Transcripts will be available on the Joint Commission Webinars & Videos webpage - scroll down and use the checkbox to sort for Expert to Expert webinars.

Register for the two upcoming events:

- [February 26, 2026](#) | Annual Updates for PC-02 and PC-07 eCQMs for 2026 Reporting Year
- [March 5, 2026](#) | Annual Updates for STK-2, STK-3, STK-5, VTE-1, and VTE-2 eCQMs for 2026 Reporting Year

Contact

For support with your quality reporting and improvement needs, please contact Jodi Winters at jwinters@stratishealth.org.

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About Stratis Health

Stratis Health is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to collaborate and innovate to improve health. Stratis Health delivers data-driven insights, evidence-based interventions, and leading-edge improvement methodologies that inspire organizations and communities to achieve solutions to their most complex health improvement challenges. Visit the Stratis Health website at www.stratishealth.org for more information.



