

FACT SHEET



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

The Georgia Department of Community Health, State Office of Rural Health Quality Improvement to Support and Sustain Critical Access Hospitals

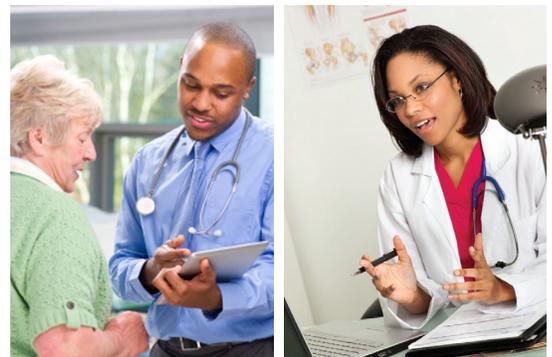
The Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex) was established by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. This federally funded program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) promotes quality and performance improvement activities; stabilizes rural hospital finance; and integrates emergency medical services (EMS) into rural health care systems.

Quality Improvement

The Flex grant is designed to improve and sustain the quality of Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs), ensuring that rural health care consumers receive high-quality, appropriate care within their communities. It provides this support through technical, operational and financial assistance.

A key initiative of the Flex program, Quality Improvement (QI) accomplishments include:

- Developed inpatient and outpatient QI programs.
- Created QI benchmarking tools for Georgia CAHs.
- Provided QI education, training and technical assistance to CEOs, medical staffs, quality improvement professionals and board members in 100 percent of CAHs.
- 17 CAH board members completed Trustee Certification Program in 2012.
- Developed QI networking collaboratives for CAHs.
- Initiated Standardized CAH Physician Peer Review Program.
- Provided QI education and training at both the hospital and physician levels for 100 percent of CAHs.



Georgia Flex Quick Facts

- Since 1999, Georgia has received more than \$5.5 million in Flex grant funding.
- Flex grants support Georgia's 31 Critical Access Hospitals.



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An Overview of Quality Improvement to Support and Sustain Critical Access Hospitals

- Enhanced data collection and reporting to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website Hospital Compare.
- Supported QI program to reduce health care-acquired infections.
- Implemented CAH QI Mentoring Program.

More than 84 percent of CAHs are participating in the Flex Grant Medicare Beneficiary QI Project (MBQIP).

About Flex

The Georgia Flex Program, which began in 1999 through the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) in the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), supports the four components of the national program:

- Quality Improvement
- Financial and Operational Improvement
- Health System Development and Community Engagement
- Conversion of 34 hospitals to CAH Status — Completed

For More Information

Visit www.dch.georgia.gov/state-office-rural-health or call 229-401-3090.