



Office of Health Care Quality

Health Care Quality Account Grants Program

FY 2022 Annual Report

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Overview of the Office of Health Care Quality

The Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) is the agency within the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) charged with monitoring the quality of care in Maryland's health care facilities and community-based programs. OHCQ's mission is to protect the health and safety of Marylanders and to ensure there is public confidence in the health care and community service delivery systems.

Through the authority of the Maryland Secretary of Health, OHCQ issues State licenses which authorize a facility or program to do business in Maryland. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has designated OHCQ as the state survey agency in Maryland. As an agent of CMS, OHCQ conducts certification and recertification activities. OHCQ makes recommendations regarding certification of a provider or supplier to CMS. Once certified, a provider or supplier may participate in and seek reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid.

Through State and/or federal authority, OHCQ conducts various types of licensure and certification surveys to determine compliance with State and/or federal regulations. When serious noncompliance is identified in a survey, OHCQ and/or CMS may impose a civil money penalty (CMP) on the provider. The Health Care Quality Account (HCQA) Grants Program is funded by the monies collected from the CMP. The program awards grants that support activities that improve the quality of life of individuals who receive services within that industry.

Health Care Quality Account Grants Program

The HCQA Grants Program includes money from five special funds. The first fund was established by a federal regulation requiring the establishment of an account to improve the quality of care provided in nursing homes nationwide. The funds were a portion of the funds collected from nursing homes for CMP imposed by CMS.

In 2000, Maryland's General Assembly established the HCQA for nursing home CMP imposed by OHCQ. In 2007, the State Assisted Living Account was established by the Maryland General Assembly. It was funded by assisted living CMP imposed by OHCQ. Subsequently, the federal Hospice Account was established for funds collected from hospices for CMP imposed by CMS. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Account was established for funds collected from providers for CMP imposed by the OIG.

Each of the separate accounts in Table 1 is a non-lapsing special fund. Monies deposited in these accounts are allocated through grant awards in support of education, training, and demonstration projects designed to improve the quality of care provided in Maryland's nursing homes, assisted living programs, or hospices. A balance is maintained in these accounts in the event funds are needed for any natural disasters, pandemics, or other deemed emergencies that affect residents of nursing homes or assisted living programs or hospice patients.

**Table 1: Source of Funds and Available Funds
in Special Fund Accounts as of June 30, 2022**

Special Fund Account	Source of Funds	Available Funds 6/30/2022
Federal Nursing Home	CMP imposed on nursing homes by CMS	\$12,178,918
State Nursing Home	CMP imposed on nursing homes by OHCQ	\$2,190,105
State Assisted Living	CMP imposed on assisted living programs by OHCQ	\$55,288
Federal Hospice	CMP imposed on hospices by CMS	\$0
Federal OIG	CMP imposed by the OIG	\$212,282

Grant Award Process

Applications for grant awards from the HCQA are accepted throughout the year. Awarded grant amounts vary and are contingent upon the availability of funds. At a minimum, the submitted application must include the following information describing the proposed project:

- Title Page: Project title; applicant organization's name and address; project director's name; and contact information;
- Executive Summary: Project's purpose, scope, and summary of entire proposal;
- Background and Significance: Impetus for project (i.e., why this project is necessary);
- Project Plan: Description of project-related goals and objectives; activities to be undertaken to accomplish goals and objectives; project timeline (i.e., nuts and bolts of how project will be implemented);
- Consumer and Stakeholder Involvement: Identification of key individual and organizational partners and how they will be engaged in project design and implementation;
- Expected Outcomes: Identification of intended beneficiaries and outcomes; deliverables; and plan for sustainability;
- Progress and Outcomes Metrics: How progress toward and achievement of expected outcomes will be assessed;

- Proposed Project Budget and Justification: Amount of funding needed to accomplish stated goals and objectives; quantified itemization and narrative justification for major categories of anticipated expenditures; and
- Assurance of Non-Supplantation: Brief description of how the project will not re-define, displace or replace current responsibilities of any participating organization to meet existing Medicare or Medicaid requirements, or other statutory or regulatory requirements.

The HCQA Grant Committee reviews all completed grant proposals according to the established criteria. In FY22, the committee included the following individuals:

- Deputy Director for Long Term Care, OHCQ
- Deputy Director for Federal Programs, OHCQ
- Deputy Director for State Programs, OHCQ
- Chief Fiscal Officer, OHCQ
- Chief Nurse, OHCQ
- Assistant Inspector General, MDH, OIG
- Assistant Attorney General, OHCQ

Grants for state funds are reviewed and determined by the committee. Proposals for federal funding must be submitted to CMS for review and approval. OHCQ cannot approve the use of federal funds, nor can OHCQ advocate with CMS on behalf of grant applicants.

Dependent upon the stated purpose and scope of the approved and funded project, one or more progress reports will be required in addition to a final report outlining findings, key accomplishments, and recommendations for future projects in quality improvement. Below is the link to the grant application and further guidance:

<https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq/Pages/GrantsProgram.aspx>

Criteria for a Grant Application

The applicant must be qualified and capable of carrying out the intended project and proposed uses of requested funds. Funds may be granted to any entity permitted under State law, provided that the funds are used to improve the quality of care provided to residents of nursing homes or assisted living programs. All requests should align with the priorities within the focus areas associated with quality of care associated with the residents.

Such organizations may include but are not limited to consumer advocacy organizations, quality improvement organizations, industry trade associations, professional societies and networks, teams located at colleges and universities, teams based within governmental agencies

or government-sponsored enterprises, and private contractors. Resident and family councils affiliated with long-term care programs are also eligible to apply.

For more information about how to apply for a HCQA grant, please go to:

<https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq/Pages/GrantsProgram.aspx>

Grants Awarded

Table 2 includes the grants forwarded from Fiscal Year 2021, including the grantee, funding source, amount awarded, and purpose and scope of the project.

**Table 2: FY 22 Health Care Quality Account Grant Awards
Forwarded from FY 21**

Grantee	Funding Source	Amount Awarded	Purpose and Scope
Mental Health Association of Maryland	Federal Nursing Home	\$80,523.37	To provide a live training program designed to improve the lives of older adults living in nursing homes. The training emphasizes hands-on skills development and utilizes interactive exercises, case studies, and role playing exercises.

CMS issued revised guidance for Nursing Home Visitation - COVID 19 on February 2, 2022, and later issued an updated guidance on April 20, 2022, to extend the approval process to use CMP funds to purchase in person visitation aids. In response to the recovery phase of COVID-19, CMS approved a second opportunity for grantees to request visitation aids in nursing homes. To simplify the application process, CMS developed a template for nursing homes that allowed states to approve COVID-19 grant applications for the purpose of visitation aids to implement safe visitation practices. The revised guidance also clarified the types of purchases. This opportunity was to purchase portable fans and room air cleaners with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA, H-13 or H-14) filters to increase or improve air quality along with other visitation devices. Facilities may use a maximum of \$3,000 for these devices per location.

Table 3 lists the grants awarded in Fiscal Year 2022, including the grantee, funding source, amount awarded, and purpose and scope of the project specifically in response to COVID-19. Facilities may have been approved for a specific amount within the approved guidelines, however, the actual award amount may differ to reflect the actual amount submitted from the facility's invoice as highlighted in this report.

**Table 3: FY 22 Health Care Quality Account Grant Awards
COVID-19 Visitation Aids**

Grantee	Funding Source	Amount Awarded	Purpose and Scope
Hillhaven Nursing & Rehabilitation	Federal Nursing Home	\$2,804.28	To provide air purifiers to support in person visitation aid to recognize continuous safety practices.
Genesis Healthcare Inc. (Doctors Community Rehab Center)	Federal Nursing Home	\$2,936.20	To provide air purifiers to support in person visitation aid to recognize continuous safety practices.
Genesis Healthcare Inc.	Federal Nursing Home	\$17,617.20	To provide air purifiers to support in person visitation and to recognize continuous safety practices for six locations.
Fairfield Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Federal Nursing Home	\$2,899.99	To provide air purifiers to support in person visitation aid to recognize continuous safety practices.

Administrative and Operating Costs

In order to provide awareness of the HCQA grant program to stakeholders, and grantees, through education, seminars, and technical support, CMS covers the personnel and operational cost for the HCQA grant administrator from the Federal Nursing Home account. OHCQ employs one full-time Grant Administrator to manage the HCQA Grants Program.

National Resources

CMS provides oversight to all states to ensure compliance with the federal laws associated with the collection and use of federal CMP funds. To remain current with the national guidance, OHCQ personnel participate in regular meetings with the CMS Civil Money Penalty Reinvestment Program (CMPRP).

OHCQ personnel also participate in quarterly meetings with the National CMP Network to discuss trends, success stories, and challenges associated with the oversight of each state's reinvestment of CMP funds. Most importantly, ideas are shared in order to solicit grant applications that will continue to improve care in nursing homes across the nation.