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What is the AJRR?

The American Joint Replacement Registry (AJRR) is a multi-stakeholder, independent, not-for-profit organization with diverse national constituents. The AJRR’s goal is to optimize patient outcomes through collection of data on all primary and revision total joint replacement procedures in the U.S. The mission of the registry is to enhance patient safety, improve quality of care, and reduce the cost of care.

With an estimated 90 percent capture rate, the registry will provide more comprehensive orthopaedic knowledge and have the potential to identify problems before they are discovered by public health agencies.

More than a data repository, the AJRR provides a wide range of actionable information and reporting that helps improve patient care and hospital management. The AJRR will help with improved patient follow-up and intervention, informed clinical decision-making, better quality control, early detection and an improved product, and increased leverage with payers.

Did You Know?

■ The AJRR has a Hospital Reporting and Dashboard Video Demonstration
The link below provides a demonstration of the AJRR reporting dashboards. The dashboards and reports are intended to provide our participants with quality metrics that can be used for a variety of improvement efforts. The reports and dashboards shown will be continuously improved over time with input from our stakeholders.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TYnEYkVE28

■ The AJRR has a Listserv
Please contact us at info@ajrr.net if you are interested in joining a user group listserv, or follow the link on our homepage to sign up.

■ The AJRR has promotional materials for participants
We have developed a few items which hospitals may use to promote their collaboration with AJRR. We are happy to provide an “AJRR Participant” logo for use on brochures, newsletters, or websites. We also have a template press release which you are free to tailor for your Surgeon Champion and local community. If you did not receive those materials, but would like to use them at your participating hospital, please contact Caryn Etkin at 847-430-5032 or etkin@ajrr.net.
AJRR is pleased to report on our new collaboration with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). AJRR is one of 37 organizations recently designated as a Qualified Clinical Data Registry (QCDR) by CMS to provide expanded, comprehensive, medical-procedure outcome information, including patient safety data. A QCDR is an entity that collects medical and/or clinical data for the purpose of patient and disease tracking to foster improvement in the quality of care provided to patients. This centrally compiled information, which will include physician and patient observations and data, will highlight joint replacement concerns, advance orthopaedic learning, and ultimately, improve patient care and outcomes.

The QCDR program is a new reporting mechanism for CMS’ Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS), a data collection effort that utilizes reimbursement incentives to encourage the reporting of patient outcomes. Currently, Eligible Professionals (EPs) provide data and information directly to CMS. With the new program beginning in 2014, EPs will have the ability to provide information directly to a designated QCDR. For 2014, EPs who satisfactorily participate in PQRS through a QCDR may earn the 2014 incentive payment (0.5%) and avoid the 2016 payment adjustment (2.0%). A QCDR will complete the collection and submission of PQRS quality measures data on behalf of EPs.

Through this new program and accreditation, “more orthopaedic surgeons will provide a broader range of data, and encourage their patients to do the same, on important hip and knee replacement outcomes, including side-effects, pain relief, and post-surgical mobility,” said William J. Maloney, MD, chair of the AJRR board of directors, and chair of orthopaedic surgery at Stanford University Medical Center. “The collection of this information through one central registry has the potential to significantly improve orthopaedic outcomes, including patient safety.”

“These registries put patients first,” said AAOS President Frederick M. Azar, MD. ”Patients need to know that there is a platform for sharing their joint-replacement perceptions and experiences. The Academy looks forward to working with AJRR to expand the number of procedures included in the data compilation shared with CMS to ultimately provide safer, more successful, and cost-effective orthopaedic care.”

See AJRR Designated a QCDR continued on page 8
This month we are proud to feature champions from two hospitals with academic affiliations. Dr. Brian Silvia is with the Boston Medical Center (BMC), a 496-bed academic medical center located in Boston’s historic South End. This hospital is the primary teaching affiliate for Boston University School of Medicine. BMC is one of our 7 participating hospitals from the Boston area. Ann Morstadt is with Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin, which includes Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital in Milwaukee, Community Memorial Hospital of Menomonee Falls, and St. Joseph’s Community Hospital of West Bend. Froedtert Hospital is one of two academic medical centers in Wisconsin, and the only one in eastern Wisconsin.

As assistant professor in orthopaedic surgery at Boston University School of Medicine, Dr. Silvia has been instrumental in moving the AJRR initiative forward at BMC. He earned his medical degree at the University of Connecticut where he also completed a PhD in the Department of Genetics and Developmental Biology. After completing his internship and orthopaedic residency at the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Silvia continued his fellowship training in Adult Reconstructive Surgery at Glasgow Royal Infirmary in Scotland, UK.

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Dr. William Maloney, chair of the AJRR board of directors, was recently selected to be a member of the National Medical Device Registries Task Force. This entity is tasked to address the implementation of registries in postmarket surveillance and throughout the Total Product Life Cycle (TPLC), formulated through five committees targeting specific aspects of registries such as their cataloguing, informatics issues, potential linking and leveraging, along with device/disease specific applications over the TPLC. The Task Force is coordinated through the Medical Device Epidemiology Network Initiative (MDEpiNet), a part of the Epidemiology Research Program at the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health.

On January 17, 2013, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) unveiled its long awaited final omnibus rule (Omnibus Rule), which implements privacy, security, and enforcement measures under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH), and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA). AJRR and its Business Associates must be in compliance with the Omnibus Rule. We recently mailed out revised Business Associate agreements to all hospitals that enrolled in AJRR prior to 2013. If you received a packet, we ask you to please sign the revised agreements as soon as possible to remain in compliance. If you have any questions, please contact Caryn Etkin at 847-430-5032 or via email at etkin@ajrr.net.

Breaking News!

On June 2, 2014, AJRR Director of Information Technology Randy Meinzer directed a webinar for the National Quality Registry Network (NQRN). As a part of the NQRN Leading Practices Webinar series, Mr. Meinzer discussed Data Security for Clinical Registries. For more information, please see http://www.nqrn.org and look for the Webinars link on the left side of the page.

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, AJRR began working with the West Virginia Medical Institute on an audit of our 2013 data. Twelve randomly selected participating hospitals were engaged to participate. Hospitals have submitted their procedural data and medical records to AJRR and the formal audit process has begun. Many thanks to those hospitals that are participating in the audit this year. We will have results in our fall newsletter.


The American Joint Replacement Registry is becoming more active in its advocacy program. The Board of Directors has instructed the Washington staff, in concert with the Executive Director, to make Congressional Members and federal agency leaders aware of our approved positions. These issues include, but are not limited to, clarification of the Common Rule and how it relates to registries, implementation of a payment incentive program for participating institutions, and the inclusion of Unique Device Identification (UDI) as a reporting element. The AJRR Regulatory Committee remains well appraised of the ongoing activities and confers with the Board of Directors when and if current doctrine requires adjusting. The following report highlights some of our most recent activities.

AJRR Executive Director Jeff Knezovich was contacted in early May by Alyssa Penna, health policy advisor to Representative Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) with a request for an update on AJRR activities since her meeting with Mr. Knezovich last November. A series of calls took place over the first week in May during which Ms. Penna asked questions about the number of hospitals participating in AJRR, numbers of providers and procedures, and levels of data being collected and reported. Mr. Knezovich also shared the information that AJRR had been selected by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to be a Qualified Clinical Data Registry (QCDR), and reported on AJRR advocacy activities in Congress to encourage the Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP) to issue a guidance clarifying applicability of the Common Rule to registries.

Two weeks after the initial conversation, Ms. Penna called Mr. Knezovich back and informed him that Representative Pascrell decided to develop legislation that would include a provision directing OHRP to issue guidance on applicability of the Common Rule to registries. She sent a copy of the draft legislation a few days later, asking for AJRR’s input. The draft legislation contains one other provision that would direct HHS to change Medicare claim forms to include a new field to require medical device UDI number entry.

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“The American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAHKS) fully supports the development and implementation of registry data collection as a great benefit for our patients,” stated Brian S. Parsley, MD, president of AAHKS. “The AJRR will provide a valuable resource to critically evaluate the outcomes of total joint replacements in the U.S. The knowledge gained through AJRR will help identify Orthopaedic Best Practices, best products, and result in continuous improvements in patient care.”

AJRR will begin test submissions of PQRS data in fall 2015 and will begin reporting in Winter 2015. Feel free to contact us if you have additional questions.

For more information about QCDRs, please see http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/PQRS/Qualified-Clinical-Data-Registry-Reporting.html

From Our Nation’s Capitol

If Representative Pascrell decides to introduce this legislation, it could be included in a larger package of Medicare quality reform proposals the House Ways and Means Committee may be pulling together for consideration later this year. AJRR will continue to work closely with Representative Pascrell’s office as they work to refine this legislative proposal.

On another advocacy front, AJRR is working actively to use the Congressional appropriation process to secure language in the Senate HHS Appropriation bill report to encourage OHRP to issue a guidance clarifying applicability of the Common Rule to registries. AJRR secured support from the Chairman of the Senate HHS Appropriation Subcommittee, Tom Harkin (D-IA). Illinois Democratic Senator Dick Durbin and Republican Senator Mark Kirk also expressed support for the effort, as well as Congressman Andy Harris (R-Maryland), a member of the House HHS Appropriation Subcommittee. Additionally, AJRR secured support from the 23 medical specialty organizations in the Physician Clinical Registry Coalition, the North American Spine Society (NASS), and the American Academy of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAHKS).

In the coming months, we anticipate there will be more outreach from congressional offices as the word spreads that the AJRR is QCDR approved. The issue of national registries remains very interesting to our elected officials.
In our Summer 2013 issue, we introduced readers to the International Society of Arthroplasty Registers (ISAR). ISAR promotes sharing of information to increase the capacity of registries. ISAR members work closely with numerous stakeholders in the arthroplasty community including international registries, institutional registries, and an array of collaboratives.

AJRR was pleased to be one of the sponsors of the Third International Congress of Arthroplasty Registries, which was held in Cambridge, MA, May 31-June 2, 2014. Many of AJRR Board and Staff were in attendance. AJRR Board Chairman Dr. William Maloney presented an update of our progress to the Congress, while AJRR Medical Director Dr. David Lewallen moderated a session on harmonization of data across registries. Board member Dr. Pamela Plouhar moderated a session pertaining to retrieval analysis and registry data.

New to the congress this year was a full day dedicated to statistics, methodologies, and validation processes. The day also included sessions related to industry collaborations with registries.
New Staff!

In May, AJRR welcomed three new staff members. Please join us in welcoming Kristine Baldwin, data submission analyst; Kate Witherspoon, program advancement associate; and Terra Miller, program advancement associate.

Kristine Baldwin is a resident of Schaumburg, IL. She is a graduate of Benedictine University in Lisle, IL. There, Kristine obtained both a BS in health science and a MS in clinical exercise physiology. She completed her internship at Northwest Community Hospital in cardiac rehabilitation and diagnostics. Prior to joining the AJRR, Kristine worked for the Healthcare Financial Management Association, a nonprofit organization for healthcare financial management executives, located in Westchester, IL. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, running, and going for walks with her golden retrievers, Max and Rudy.

Kate Witherspoon is originally from Port Byron, IL, and received a BA in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign. She recently finished her Master of Public Administration degree from DePaul University in Chicago. Prior to joining AJRR, Kate was a policy fellow in the Office of Mayor Rahm Emanuel. In her free time, she enjoys jogging along Lake Michigan, going to brunch with friends, watching the Blackhawks and the Bears, spending time with family and her cat, Tabby, and trying new recipes.

Terra Miller is originally from Crown Point, IN. She received her undergraduate degree in public relations from Illinois State University (ISU), where she also played Division I golf. Terra also received an MS in communication from ISU. During her time at ISU, she worked for two years at the Illinois State Career Center and held multiple internships including working in the Athletic Media Relations Department and as a tournament coordinator intern for the Northwest Indiana Junior Golf Association. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her dog, Dash.
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Ann Morstad is the manager of clinical quality and patient safety at Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin, where she has worked for more than 14 years. Part of a unique office that bridges College Physicians and Froedtert Hospital, she oversees a variety of strategic projects. Her group is having fun developing and testing the data sets for the American Joint Replacement Registry, while coordinating with the Department of Orthopaedics. Ms. Morstad has a BS in biology from Carroll University and an MS in health communication and management from Colorado State University. She earned certification as a Patient Safety Officer from Duke University and is about to complete certification for the American Society of Professionals in Patient Safety.

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Upcoming Events

AAHKS 24th Annual Meeting
November 7-9, 2014
Sheraton Dallas Hotel
Dallas, Texas

AAOS 2015 Annual Meeting
March 24 – 28, 2015
Las Vegas, NV

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