Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
AHRQ QI Windows Application

Release Notes

Updated September 7, 2005

The AHRQ Quality Indicators Windows Application is intended as a tool for individual hospitals that do not have access to the statistical software packages required by the currently available SAS and SPSS syntax. The Windows Application will replace the SPSS version beginning in November, 2005. The SAS version will continue to be available. At this time, AHRQ recommends that state data agencies, hospital associations and others using large databases continue to use the SAS version due to limitations on the number of records the Windows Application is able to process.

1. Windows Application Releases

The AHRQ Quality Indicators Windows Application Version 1.0 is the first of three planned releases of the software. The primary intent of Version 1.0 is to provide individual hospitals with a tool to review individual cases as flagged by the AHRQ QI specifications and to calculate basic rates for comparison with peers. Version 2.0 will incorporate limited enhancements to the features and functionality of application based on recommendations from users. Version 3.0 will update the indicator specifications based on FY2006 coding changes, incorporate a limited license APR-DRG V20.0 grouper for the Inpatient Quality Indicators, and include a new module of indicators for the pediatric population. After the third release, AHRQ anticipates an annual release of the Windows Application in January of each year to update the indicator specifications for fiscal year coding changes and other indicator revisions based on published literature, empirical analysis and user experience.

Windows Application Releases

Windows Application Version	Description	Major Features	Anticipated Release Date
Version 1.0	Initial Release	Indicator flagging and basic rate calculation	September, 2005
Version 2.0	Supplemental Release	Improved performance and user-identified enhancements	November, 2005
Version 3.0	Updated Release	FY2006 coding update Limited license APR-DRG V20.0 Pediatric Indicator Module	January, 2006
Version 3.x and later	Future Releases	Fiscal year coding update Other indicator revisions	January each year

2. Application Performance

Currently the performance of the Windows Application is optimized for about 500,000 records. Although the public-use Microsoft SQL Server is capable of storing up to 1.5 million records, the program run-time will slow significantly after 500,000 records depending on the processing speed of your computer. Users with large datasets should consider either continuing to use the SAS version or dividing the dataset into smaller pieces (e.g. by quarter). Over time the Windows Application will be enhanced to improve performance to the extent feasible within the constraints of the public-use Microsoft SQL Server[1].

3. AHRQ QI Windows Application Features

The AHRQ QI Windows Application Version 1.0 replicates the indicator specification and rate calculation of the currently available SAS syntax for the PQI, IQI and PSI modules[2]. However, there are some differences between the SAS and Windows versions which are summarized in the table below. See the AHRQ QI Windows Software Documentation for additional details.

Features Comparison Summary

Feature	Current SAS Version	Windows Version 1.0
AHRQ QI modules	Separate syntax for the PQI, IQI and PSI modules	One application for all three modules
Provider and Area Level	Separate syntax for provider and area level indicators	One application for area and provider level indicators
Rate Calculation	Calculates rates for all indicators in module	User may select individual indicators by module or type
Rate Stratification	Based on age, sex, race/ethnicity and payer	Adds year, quarter and refined age and race/ethnicity categories
Third party software	Requires SAS license	Requires public-use Microsoft SQL Server and Microsoft.NET
Expected rates	Discharge level – No Provider level – Yes Area level - No	Discharge level – Yes Provider level – Yes Area level - Yes
Smoothed rates	Yes	No[a]
Confidence Intervals	Optional	No[a]
APR-DRG[b]	Version 15.0	Version 15.0
Census data	Single calendar year	Multiple calendar years

[a] Version 3.0 will include smoothed rates and confidence intervals
[b] Version 3.0 will update to APR-DRG Version 20.0

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[1] Users with an existing Microsoft SQL Server may be able to store a larger number of records. See the AHRQ QI Windows Installation Guide for instructions on installing the software with an existing Microsoft SQL Server.
[2] Prevention Quality Indicators, Version 2.1 Revision 4 (November, 2004); Inpatient Quality Indicators, Version 2.1 Revision 4a (May, 2005); Patient Safety Indicators, Version 2.1 Revision 3a (February, 2005).

4. FY2006 ICD-9-CM and DRG Coding Updates

The SAS version of the AHRQ QI modules will be updated to incorporate the FY2006 coding changes in November, 2005 (PQI), December, 2005 (IQI) and January, 2006 (PSI and Pediatric). The Windows version will be updated to incorporate the FY2006 ICD-9-CM and DRG coding changes in January, 2006. The SPSS version will not be updated to incorporate the FY2006 ICD-9-CM and DRG coding changes and will no longer be supported beginning in November, 2005. Future fiscal year coding updates will follow the same release schedule.

5. What to do if you have problems or suggestions

The AHRQ QI Support Team welcomes your feedback on the Windows Application features and functionality. If you have problems with the software or suggestions for improvements, please contact the AHRQ QI Support Team at support@qualityindicators.ahrq.gov or leave a voicemail at (888) 512 – 6090.