

RISING TOGETHER FOR ↑ EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH CARE QUALITY ABQAURP'S 49TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Promoting Health Care Quality & Patient Safety through Education & Certification



SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2026

Sheraton Sand Key Resort | Clearwater Beach, FL



CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

CME / CE Accreditation

In support of improving patient care, the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians (ABQAURP) is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.



This activity was planned by and for the healthcare team, and learners will receive 15 Interprofessional Continuing Education (IPCE) credits for learning and change.



Physicians

ABQAURP designates this live activity for a maximum of **15 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™**. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nurses

This activity is designated for 15 nursing contact hours.

Family Physicians

The AAFP has reviewed Rising Together for Excellence in Health Care Quality and deemed it acceptable for up to 15.00 Live AAFP Prescribed credit(s). Term of Approval is from 09/24/2026 to 09/25/2026. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Osteopathic

This program is approved for Category 2 credit by the American Osteopathic Association.

Certified Case Managers (CCM) and Certified Disability Management Specialists (CDMS)

This program has been submitted to The Commission for approval to provide Board-Certified Case Managers with 15 contact hours.

This program has been submitted to The Commission for approval to provide Board-Certified Disability Management Specialists with 15 contact hours.

Physician Assistants

ABQAURP has been authorized by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for 15 AAPA Category 1 CME credits. Approval is valid until September 25, 2026. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.



Social Workers

As a Jointly Accredited Organization, ABQAURP is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit. Social workers completing this course receive 15 general continuing education credits.

WELCOME RECEPTION BE OUR GUEST!

**Thursday, September 24, 2026
5:30pm – 7:30pm**

On behalf of ABQAURP's Board of Directors and staff, I am honored to invite you to join us at our 49th Annual Conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida.

This year's event, "Rising Together for Excellence in Health Care Quality," brings together an interprofessional group from across the health care field to explore innovative, evidence-based strategies that enhance communication, support compliance, leverage technology, and elevate performance across the continuum of care.

Celebrate with ABQAURP's Members and Fellows at Thursday's Networking Reception to connect with your colleagues and engage with our exhibitors and faculty. Thanks to your continued engagement, ABQAURP is recognized as the preeminent international certification and membership association dedicated to promoting health care quality through education and certification for physicians, nurses, and other members of the health care team.

I hope you will join me at our 49th Annual Conference and invite your colleagues to learn and celebrate with all those who have contributed not only to our organization, but to the Health Care Quality and Patient Safety movement as well.

I'd like to extend a special invitation to health care quality professionals who are seeking a higher level of involvement but have not yet joined the ABQAURP community. Please plan to join us and take advantage of this unparalleled opportunity to build relationships and enhance your knowledge. I look forward to seeing you in Clearwater Beach.

Sincerely,

Joseph G. Vitolo
MD, FAPA, FASAM, CHCQM, FABQAURP
Chairman of the Board



Health care is transforming rapidly, driven by regulatory change, emerging technologies such as AI, evolving reimbursement models, and increasing demands for coordinated, high-value care. Today's interprofessional teams must collaborate more effectively than ever to ensure safe care transitions, optimize utilization, strengthen documentation, and improve population health outcomes.

Join us at **ABQAURP's 49th Annual Conference** to explore innovative, evidence based strategies that enhance communication, support compliance, leverage technology, and elevate performance across the continuum of care.

Together, we will rise to meet the challenges of a shifting health care landscape—bridging gaps between quality care delivery, reimbursement integrity, and patient satisfaction.

Upon conclusion of this live conference, members of the interprofessional team should be able to:

- Apply innovative, evidence-based strategies to strengthen collaboration across the health care team to improve care transitions
- Assess the practical application of AI integration in health systems that manages risk and aligns with organizational strategy
- Examine current regulatory and legislative changes to enhance value-based, high quality, coordinated health care
- Explore innovative approaches to integrate technology and bridge gaps in patient care to improve care transitions, decrease acute care visits, and expand access to care
- Evaluate how targeted, accurate documentation supports regulatory compliance while enhancing interprofessional communication and safer health outcomes
- Determine how data-driven care management strategies and process improvement approaches can be used to optimize utilization and improve quality metrics
- Describe how quality measures impact point-of-care decisions to improve performance and support population-based health outcomes
- Identify crucial skills for today's Physician Advisor to flourish such as medical necessity documentation, utilization management, coding, reporting metrics, denials management, and health team collaboration

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

4:30pm-6:30pm

Early Registration

Thursday, September 24, 2026

6:45am-7:45am

Registration and Continental Breakfast Buffet

7:45am

Welcome and Announcements



Joseph G. Vitolo
MD, FAPA, FASAM, CHCQM-PHYADV, FABQAURP
ABQAURP Chairman of the Board



Sunil K. Sinha
MD, MBA, CHCQM, FACHE, FABQAURP
ABQAURP Vice Chairman & Education Committee Chair

8:00am

Operationalizing Clinical AI: Navigating Governance and Measuring Impact



Kristin Preihs, MPH - Vice President, Health Research & Educational Trust - American Hospital Association

- Analyze the current clinical AI landscape to distinguish between market hype and scalable, high-value applications for health systems
- Evaluate governance frameworks and prioritization methodologies effectively used to manage risk and align AI investments with organizational strategy
- Assess the clinical and financial return on investment of deployed AI solutions through a review of real-world case studies and performance data

9:00am

Regulatory Policy – Current and Expected Changes



Alex Bardakh MPP, CAE, PLC - Senior Director, Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships - Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association

- Implement changes based on legislative and regulatory landscape shaping health care policy
- Compare various value-based care models
- Synthesize new coding initiatives that drive reimbursement

10:00am

Networking Break

10:15am

Building Excellence and Quality Outcomes in Transitions of Care



Cheri Lattimer RN, BSN - Executive Director - National Transitions of Care Coalition (NTOCC)

- Identify key elements of high-quality, interdisciplinary transitions of care and common risk points that contribute to patient safety events and suboptimal outcomes across care settings
- Describe evidence-based best practices and innovative strategies to promote collaboration amongst clinicians, care coordinators, pharmacists, and social services
- Evaluate emerging care delivery and payment models, including value-based reimbursement and CPT coding, which support sustainable, high-quality transitions of care and improved clinical outcomes

11:15am

Elevating Surgical Outcomes Through CDI: Strengthening Medical Necessity Documentation Across the Care Continuum



Signa LaToya Perkins MD, MBS, CPHYADV - Chief, Department of Medicine - Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital and Medical Director, Physician Advisory Services - Sound Physicians

- Analyze gaps in current surgical medical necessity documentation by comparing real-world CDI cases across the operative phases
- Apply evidence-based CDI principles to revise documentation that accurately reflects surgical medical necessity allowing for alignment with coding, quality, and regulatory requirements
- Create an interdisciplinary documentation workflow that strengthens medical necessity support across the care continuum and improves downstream surgical, quality outcomes

12:15pm

Networking Lunch (Buffet Lunch Provided)

1:15pm

Delivering Quality Care & Data-Driven Gap Closure



Michael S. Barr MD, MBA, MACP, FRCP - President & Founder - MEDIS, LLC

- Analyze the origins, types, and purposes of quality measures distinguishing how accountability measures differ from improvement-oriented measures within value-based care frameworks
- Evaluate the role of AI, need for proper data infrastructure, and streamlined clinical workflows to enhance gap closure and support person-centered, population-based care
- Design an actionable approach to integrating timely, clinically relevant data, including patient-reported outcomes, into routine practice to improve quality performance and support continuous improvement efforts

2:15pm



From Silos to Synergy: Standardizing Whole-Person Care Across the Continuum

Raine Arndt-Couch DSW, JD, LCSW, CCM, FCM - Founder & Principal Consultant - Responsive Advocacy & Consulting, LLC

- Analyze how fragmented systems, inconsistent processes, and professional silos impede integration of behavioral health, well-being, pharmacy, and community supports into population health and quality efforts across care settings
- Differentiate between aspirational concepts such as integrated care, health equity, and social drivers of health and the standardized interdisciplinary workflows essential for supporting whole-person care and improving performance
- Develop practical, interdisciplinary strategies to break down silos, address operational barriers, and strengthen collaboration across roles, with the goal of leveraging the unique contributions of each care team member to advance whole-person care and improve outcomes

3:15pm

Networking Break

3:30pm



Reducing Preventable Utilization: The Physician Advisor's Role in Improving Medicaid Outcomes

Allison Raines DO, MBA, MPH, FACEP, CHCQM, CPHYADV - Senior Medical Director and Chief Medical Officer Medicaid - Sentara Health Plans

Tiffany Kitts Thymius DO - Medical Director of Advisory Services - Sound Physicians

- Analyze the role of the Physician Advisor in reducing preventable, avoidable, and medically unnecessary utilization in the Medicaid population
- Apply data-driven strategies, including risk stratification, cohort identification, and patient segmentation, to improve care management and optimize appropriate utilization of services
- Evaluate process improvements and care pathway interventions for their impact on quality metrics, emergency department utilization, and hospital readmission rates

4:30pm



Leveraging Tele-Oncology to Improve Rural Access, Transitions of Care, and Quality Outcomes

Robert Rice MD, PhD, MMM - Physician Hematology and Oncology - Intermountain Health

- Describe tele-oncology models in rural settings
- Apply transitions of care frameworks using telemedicine
- Identify telehealth strategies that reduce acute care utilization

5:30pm

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

5:30pm

Networking Reception

Registration and Networking Reception (21 and over only, please)

Friday, September 25, 2026

6:45am-7:45am

Registration and Continental Breakfast Buffet

You do not need to register again if you've attended Thursday sessions.

7:45am



Welcome and Announcements

Sunil K. Sinha MD, MBA, CHCQM, FACHE, FABQAURP
ABQAURP Vice Chairman & Education Committee Chair

8:00am



AI Ethics and Healthcare

James B. Trumble MD, MBA - Assistant Chief Medical Officer, Vice President Clinical Integration - TidalHealth

- Highlight key AI compliance principles and practical clinical applications supporting safe, ethical, and effective care
- Explain adversarial attacks and their consequences
- Explain how trust, responsibility, and transparency shape the safe and ethical use of AI in health care delivery

9:00am



Winning at Denials: A Strong Offense is the Best Defense

Catherine Pesek Bird DO, MBA, CHCQM-PHYADV, ACPA-C - Physician Advisor - Lakeland Regional Health Medical Center

- Evaluate the types of denials based on patient status and medical necessity
- Compare results based on different approaches to clinical documentation
- Examine the potential value of AI-related software to hospital metrics

10:00am

Networking Break

10:15am



Using Medicare Regulations to Hold Medicare Advantage Plans Accountable

Timothy Brundage MD, CCDS - CEO and Physician Advisor - Brundage Group

- Explain CMS' application of the Medicare Two-Midnight rule to Medicare Advantage (MA) plans
- Distinguish key elements of the Two-Midnight rule, physician expectation, threshold, and presumption, and their implications for medical necessity decisions
- Analyze CMS' clarification on coverage vs. payment determinations and its impact on inpatient medical necessity denials and hospital reimbursement
- Identify patterns of payer behavior contributing to increased observation stays and hospital revenue loss

11:15am



Optimizing Technology and Teaching for Optimal Patient Care and Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Timothy P. Connelly MD, MBA, FACP, CHCQM-PHYADV - Associate Program Director Internal Medicine Residency - HCA Healthcare

- Identify CDI opportunities and methods to incorporate into your electronic health record for better CC, MCC, and HCC capture
- Incorporate documentation templates to support medical necessity on the front end prior to sending an authorization request to an MA plan
- Appraise artificial intelligence applications as they pertain to health care quality and utilization review and determine which ones you should consider implementing in your workflows

12:15pm

Networking Lunch (Buffet Lunch Provided)

1:15pm

Utilizing AI and Automation to Streamline Utilization Review and Protect Hospital Revenue



Sri Suravarapu MD, MPH, CPE, CHCQM-PHYADV - Medical Director, Utilization Review/Clinical Appeals - Stormont Vail Health
Chad Yeager RN, MSN - Vice President, Quality and Population Health - Stormont Vail Health

- Describe how using AI technology for utilization review improves financial performance by protecting hospitals from unnecessary denials and increasing staff productivity
- Assess the sources of EHR data that would be beneficial in determining medical necessity and priority for patient admissions
- Identify opportunities to improve existing medical necessity documentation workflows within the EHR

2:15pm

Expanding Role of the Physician Advisor and Impact on Health System Performance



Miral Patel MD - System Lead Physician Advisor - CommonSpirit Health

- Discuss expanding roles of Physician Advisors within health systems
- Explain how Physician Advisors support organizational goals
- Evaluate the impact of Physician Advisors on measurable outcomes

3:15pm

Networking Break

3:30pm

Physician Advisor and Care Team Trivia



Melissa Buchner-Mehling MD, CHCQM, CPHYADV, FABQAURP - Associate Chief Medical Officer - Sound Advisory
Natasha L. Chen MD, CHCQM, CPHYADV, FABQAURP - Physician Advisor - Natasha L. Chen, M.D. PLLC

- Describe Medicare beneficiary notices and when to issue
- Assess the appropriate level of inpatient or outpatient care and best practices for documenting and billing patient services
- Identify physician advisor roles and responsibilities within the health care team

4:30pm

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

*Schedule, faculty, and content are subject to change.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

REGISTRATION FEES:	THURSDAY ONLY	FRIDAY ONLY	TWO DAYS
<i>Two day track</i>	Earn up to 8 CME / CE	Earn up to 7 CME / CE	Earn up to 15 CME / CE
ABQAURP DIPLOMATE	\$625	\$555	\$1,180
PROFESSIONAL MEMBER	\$675	\$600	\$1,275
NON-MEMBER	\$730	\$645	\$1,375

Seating is limited and not guaranteed until all financial obligations are satisfied.



CONFERENCE FEE INCLUDES: CME/CE Credits, Course Materials, Welcome Reception, Continental Breakfast each day, Buffet Lunch each day, & Networking Breaks

FREE REGISTRATION!!

Do you know a friend or colleague that would benefit from ABQAURP education or membership?

Invite them to our conference to discover our top-notch education!

Bring 1 Non-Member Colleague = 50% Off Your Registration Fee | Bring 2 Non-Member Colleagues = Your Registration is FREE

Group discounts available. Call for details on these offers.

SPECIAL DISCOUNT

10% OFF



USE PROMO CODE: **BROCHURE26**

Use promo code: BROCHURE26 to apply a 10% discount to your conference registration upon checkout. Discount cannot be combined with other offers.

Apply at checkout online:

Promotion code

BROCHURE26

Apply

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation to participate in any presentation must contact ABQAURP by August 25, 2026. Persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation in their room should contact the Sheraton Sand Key at (727) 595-1611 to make arrangements. Attendees with specific dietary requirements must contact ABQAURP by September 1, 2026, to make necessary arrangements. Additional fees may apply.

All cancellations and transfers are subject to a \$100 processing fee. Credits on account may be approved for extenuating circumstances, less the \$100 processing fee. If you do not cancel and do not attend, you are still responsible for payment. ABQAURP reserves the right to cancel the conference and return all registration course fees. ABQAURP may reschedule programs or close registration when programs are sold out. For these reasons, registrants are advised against purchasing non-refundable airline tickets.

Register online at: abqaaurp.org/AnnualConference or call (800) 998-6030

WHO IS ATTENDING:

- » Physician & Nurse Leaders
- » Executive Leaders (CEO, CMO, CFO)
- » Physician Advisors
- » Hospitalists
- » Medical Directors
- » Quality & Utilization Directors
- » Mental Health Professionals
- » Clinical Documentation Specialists
- » Case Managers & Social Workers
- » Risk Managers & Legal Counsel



American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians®
Promoting Health Care Quality and Patient Safety Through Education and Certification
6640 Congress Street, Suite 102, New Port Richey, FL 34653-2804

PRSRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MAILCO



Book Your Stay At Sheraton Sand Key Resort

Make your reservations by calling the Resort at (727) 595-1611 or book online at: <https://tinyurl.com/5dtbajz9>
Register by September 1, 2026, to receive our special room rate of \$229 per night. Rooms in this block are VERY LIMITED and are on a first-come, first-served basis.

Group Rate: \$229.00 per night, plus applicable taxes, Single/Double Occupancy.

Group Name: ABQAURP

Parking and resort fees waived for ABQAURP attendees.



CONFERENCE PARTNERS:

