

**Technical Advisory Interpreting 28 Pa Code § 9.761-2 Provider Credentialing and Credentialing Standards as related to “provisional credentialing” as recognized by NCQA**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health’s (the Department) regulations relating to managed care organizations (28 Pa. Code ch. 9), set out the requirements for credentialing of plan health care providers and standards for the credentialing of those providers. (See 28 Pa. Code §§9.671 & 9.672 (relating to provider credentialing; credentialing standards).

Recently the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) modified its credentialing standards (as published in the **Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of MCOs**-Effective July 1, 2006), to permit “provisional credentialing” of providers under some circumstances. (See NCQA CR 3., Element B, Page 265-66). The Department has been asked questions regarding “provisional credentialing” and compliance with state law and regulation.

The Department finds NCQA’s changes and provisional credentialing are not inconsistent with its regulations relating to provider credentialing. In order to satisfy requirements relating to credentialing, plans may, but are not required to, offer provisional credentialing. Plans may, of course, continue to require full credentialing of all providers.

The Department will allow plans to provisionally credential health care providers provided the following are requirements are satisfied and the provider will be practicing in a group practice or multi-provider setting:

1. The Plan receives a current, complete and signed application.
2. The Plan conducts primary source verification of a current license to practice and if the provider is expected to prescribe medications, a current and valid DEA certificate.
3. The Plan verifies the provider has current malpractice insurance that meets minimal plan requirements.
4. The Plan performs a query with the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB).

While the Department supports the inclusion of provisional credentialing by NCQA, we are also concerned that plans use good judgment when designing or adopting such provisional credentialing standards. Provisional credentialing will not be considered for solo-practitioners.

Comments, suggestions or questions regarding this technical advisory should be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Managed Care at phone 717-787-5193, or in writing to the attention of Linda Seip, RN, Nursing Services Consultant, Bureau of Managed Care, Pennsylvania Department of Health, 912 Health and Welfare Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120.