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## **Rhode Island Quality Institute's COO and CIO, Gary Christensen, selected for new Innovation Advisors Program to improve care for patients**

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND--Today, Rhode Island Quality Institute announced that Gary Christensen has been selected for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Innovation Advisors Program.

The initiative, launched by the CMS Innovation Center in October 2011, will help health professionals deepen skills that will drive improvements to patient care and reduce costs.

Christensen is one of 73 individuals from 27 States and the District of Columbia participating in the Innovation Advisors Program. After an initial orientation phase, Innovation Advisors will work with the CMS Innovation Center to test new models of care delivery in their own organizations and communities. They will also create partnerships to find new ideas that work and share them regionally and across the United States.

Funding for this initiative was made possible by the Affordable Care Act.

"There has been an incredible groundswell of interest in becoming an Innovation Advisor. It's clear that doctors, hospitals and health care providers are enthusiastic about implementing the Affordable Care Act and strengthening our health care system," said CMS Acting Administrator Marilyn Tavenner.

The 73 individuals were selected from 920 applications through a competitive process, and include clinicians, allied health professionals, health administrators and others. By attending in-person meetings as well as remote sessions to expand their skills and applying what they learn, the Advisors will be able to

deepen their knowledge in health care economics and finance, population health, systems analysis, and operations research.

“We’re looking to these Innovation Advisors to be our partners—we want them to discover and generate new ideas that will work and help us bring them to every corner of the United States,” said CMS Innovation Center Director Rick Gilfillan, M.D.

Among other duties, the Advisors will be expected to support the Innovation Center in testing new models of care delivery, to form partnerships with local organizations to drive delivery system reform, and to improve their own health systems so their communities will have better health and better care at a lower cost.

Rhode Island Quality Institute will receive a stipend of up to \$20,000. The stipend will be used to support Mr. Christensen’s activities while serving as an Innovation Advisor.

More information about the Innovation Advisors Program, including a fact sheet and a list of participants and their affiliated organizations, can be found at: <http://innovations.cms.gov/initiatives/innovation-advisors/index.html>.

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***About the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI)***

*Founded in 2001, the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) is a collaboration of leaders in the Rhode Island community who share the intent to substantively improve the healthcare system in the state. The collaboration includes CEOs of hospitals, health insurers, and businesses, along with leaders of consumer groups, academia, and government. RIQI’s mission is to significantly improve the quality, safety, and value of health care in Rhode Island. RIQI is the Governor-designated sole Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) for Rhode Island, chosen to coordinate the statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE). As the RHIO, RIQI is charged with bringing together health care stakeholders within the state and governing HIE among them for the purpose of improving health outcomes in the community. For more information, visit [www.RIQI.org](http://www.RIQI.org).*