

## **Understanding the Role of the Quality Innovation Network- Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) in Your Area**

*The following information is part 1 of a 3-part series on understanding the role of the Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) in your area.*

### **Overview**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contract with Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organizations (QIN-QIOs) to improve the quality of healthcare and improve health outcomes attained by Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Original Fee for Service Medicare (Part A and Part B). QIN-QIOs engage in local quality improvement initiatives to address potential areas of improvement. They work directly with hospitals, health systems, and providers to initiate and support health care quality improvement activities targeting Medicare beneficiaries.

### **Background:**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has a network of contractors called Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) that seek to improve the quality of care for Medicare beneficiaries in a defined geographic region. The QIO program is one of the largest federal programs dedicated to improving health quality for Medicare beneficiaries. QIOs are required under Sections 1152-1154 of the Social Security Act.

In 2014, CMS established a new functional structure for the Quality Improvement Organization program, which includes 14 Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organizations (QIN-QIOs). Each QIN-QIO serves a region of two to a maximum of six states and territories. This is a significant change in the administration of the QIO program. Prior to this change, each individual state had a different quality improvement organization. Since each state had a different QIO, there was no requirement for collaboration or coordination of quality initiatives between states. The new regional approach requires the implementation of quality program initiatives across the defined contracted region for the QIN-QIO.

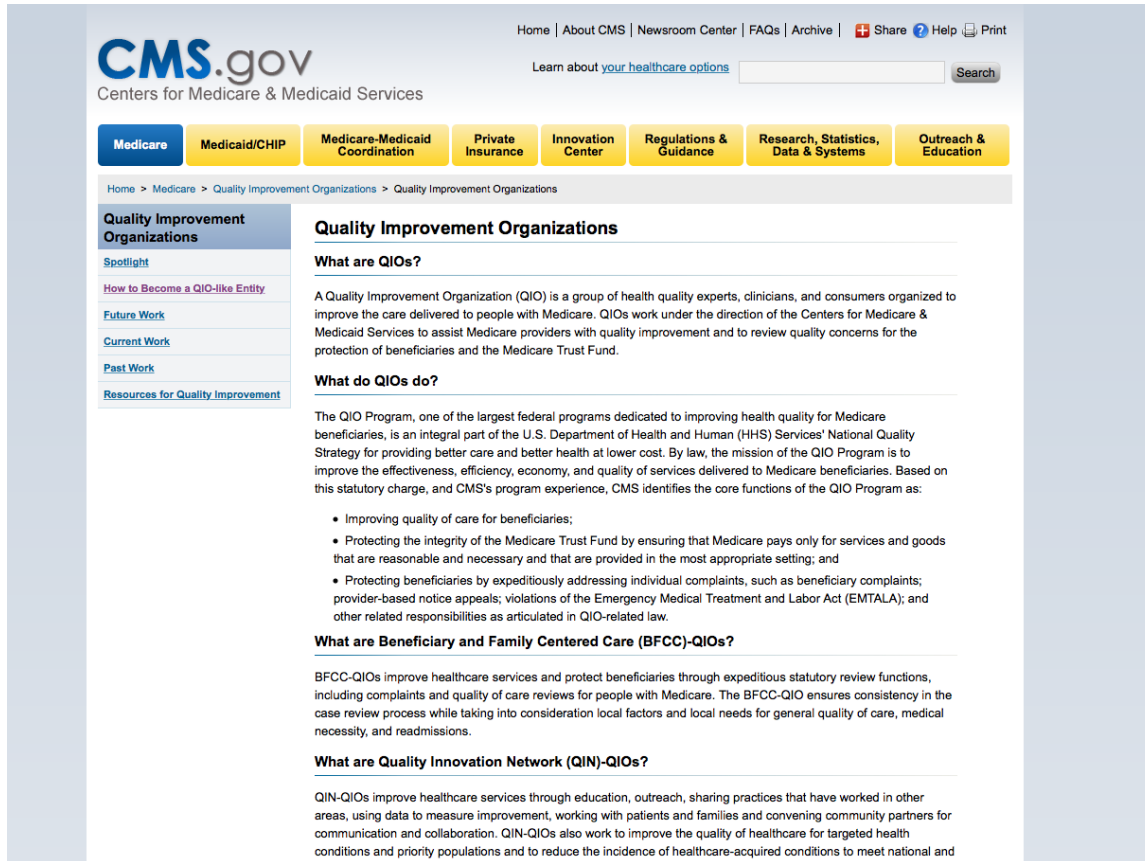
*Note:* The QIN-QIO program is specifically for beneficiaries enrolled in Original Fee for Service Medicare. Beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage plans) are not targeted by QIN-QIO initiatives. Therefore, if your program or service targets a Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage) population, this tip sheet may not be useful to you.

## Finding Your QIN-QIO:

1. First, access the CMS website dedicated to providing information regarding the QIN-QIOs:

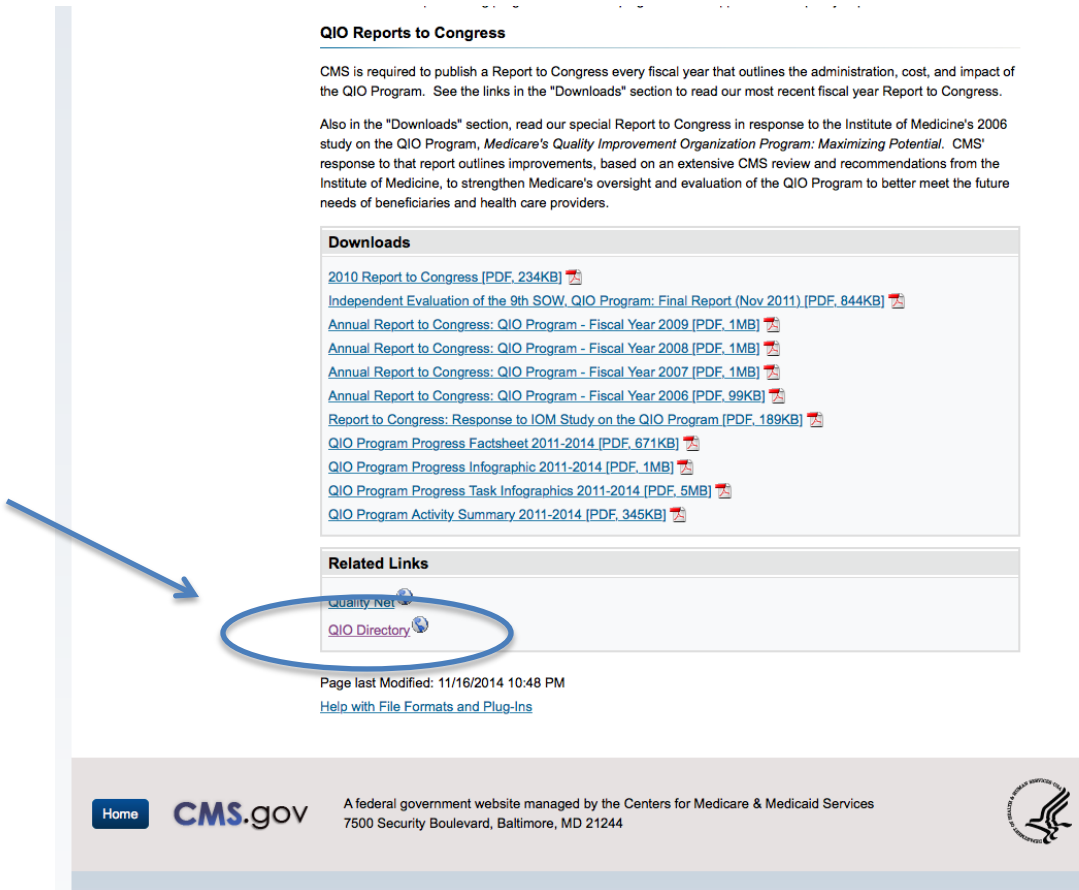
<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/QualityImprovementOrgs/index.html?redirect=/qualityimprovementorgs/>

The following screenshot shows the CMS webpage that is accessed using the link above:



The screenshot displays the CMS.gov website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home | About CMS | Newsroom Center | FAQs | Archive | Share | Help | Print. Below this is a search bar with the text "Learn about your healthcare options" and a "Search" button. The main header features the CMS.gov logo and the text "Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services". A horizontal menu contains several categories: Medicare, Medicaid/CHIP, Medicare-Medicaid Coordination, Private Insurance, Innovation Center, Regulations & Guidance, Research, Statistics, Data & Systems, and Outreach & Education. The breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Medicare > Quality Improvement Organizations > Quality Improvement Organizations. The left sidebar lists "Quality Improvement Organizations" with sub-links: Spotlight, How to Become a QIO-like Entity, Future Work, Current Work, Past Work, and Resources for Quality Improvement. The main content area is titled "Quality Improvement Organizations" and includes sections: "What are QIOs?" (defining QIOs as groups of health quality experts, clinicians, and consumers), "What do QIOs do?" (listing core functions like improving care, protecting the Medicare Trust Fund, and addressing complaints), "What are Beneficiary and Family Centered Care (BFCC)-QIOs?" (describing their role in reviewing complaints and quality of care), and "What are Quality Innovation Network (QIN)-QIOs?" (describing their role in improving services through education and data analysis).

2. Once at the webpage, look under “Related Links” and click on “QIO Directory”.



**QIO Reports to Congress**

CMS is required to publish a Report to Congress every fiscal year that outlines the administration, cost, and impact of the QIO Program. See the links in the "Downloads" section to read our most recent fiscal year Report to Congress.

Also in the "Downloads" section, read our special Report to Congress in response to the Institute of Medicine's 2006 study on the QIO Program, *Medicare's Quality Improvement Organization Program: Maximizing Potential*. CMS' response to that report outlines improvements, based on an extensive CMS review and recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, to strengthen Medicare's oversight and evaluation of the QIO Program to better meet the future needs of beneficiaries and health care providers.

**Downloads**

- [2010 Report to Congress \[PDF, 234KB\]](#)
- [Independent Evaluation of the 9th SOW, QIO Program: Final Report \(Nov 2011\) \[PDF, 844KB\]](#)
- [Annual Report to Congress: QIO Program - Fiscal Year 2009 \[PDF, 1MB\]](#)
- [Annual Report to Congress: QIO Program - Fiscal Year 2008 \[PDF, 1MB\]](#)
- [Annual Report to Congress: QIO Program - Fiscal Year 2007 \[PDF, 1MB\]](#)
- [Annual Report to Congress: QIO Program - Fiscal Year 2006 \[PDF, 99KB\]](#)
- [Report to Congress: Response to IOM Study on the QIO Program \[PDF, 189KB\]](#)
- [QIO Program Progress Factsheet 2011-2014 \[PDF, 671KB\]](#)
- [QIO Program Progress Infographic 2011-2014 \[PDF, 1MB\]](#)
- [QIO Program Progress Task Infographics 2011-2014 \[PDF, 5MB\]](#)
- [QIO Program Activity Summary 2011-2014 \[PDF, 345KB\]](#)

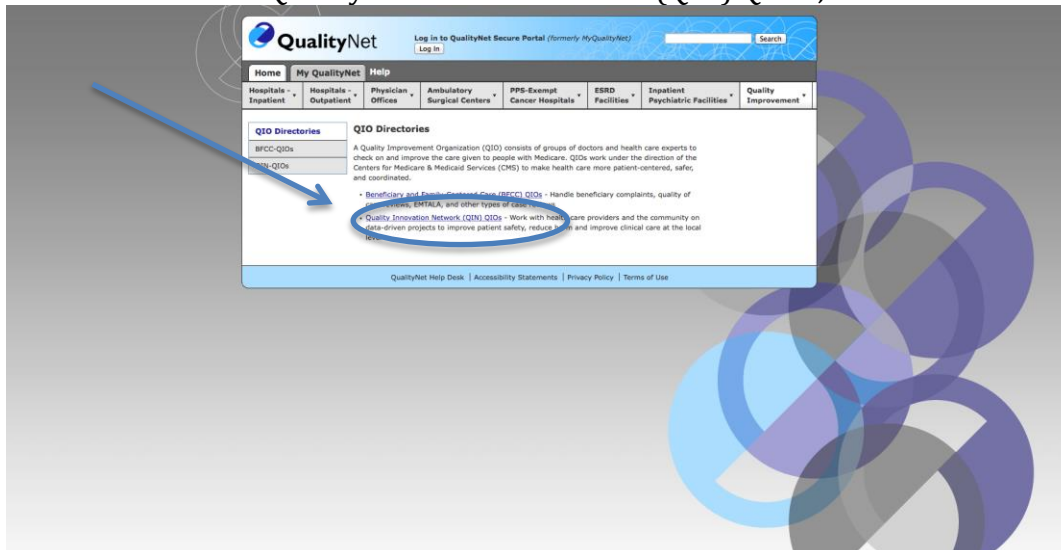
**Related Links**

- [Quality Net](#)
- [QIO Directory](#)

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Home CMS.gov A federal government website managed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21244

3. When you click on that link, you will be directed to the Quality Net webpage. Click on the link “Quality Innovation Network (QIN) QIOs”, as shown below:



**QualityNet** Log in to QualityNet Secure Portal (formerly MyQualityNet)

Home My QualityNet Help

Hospitals - Inpatient Hospitals - Outpatient Physician Offices Ambulatory Surgical Centers PPS-Exempt Cancer Hospitals ESRD Facilities Inpatient Psychiatric Facilities Quality Improvement

**QIO Directories**

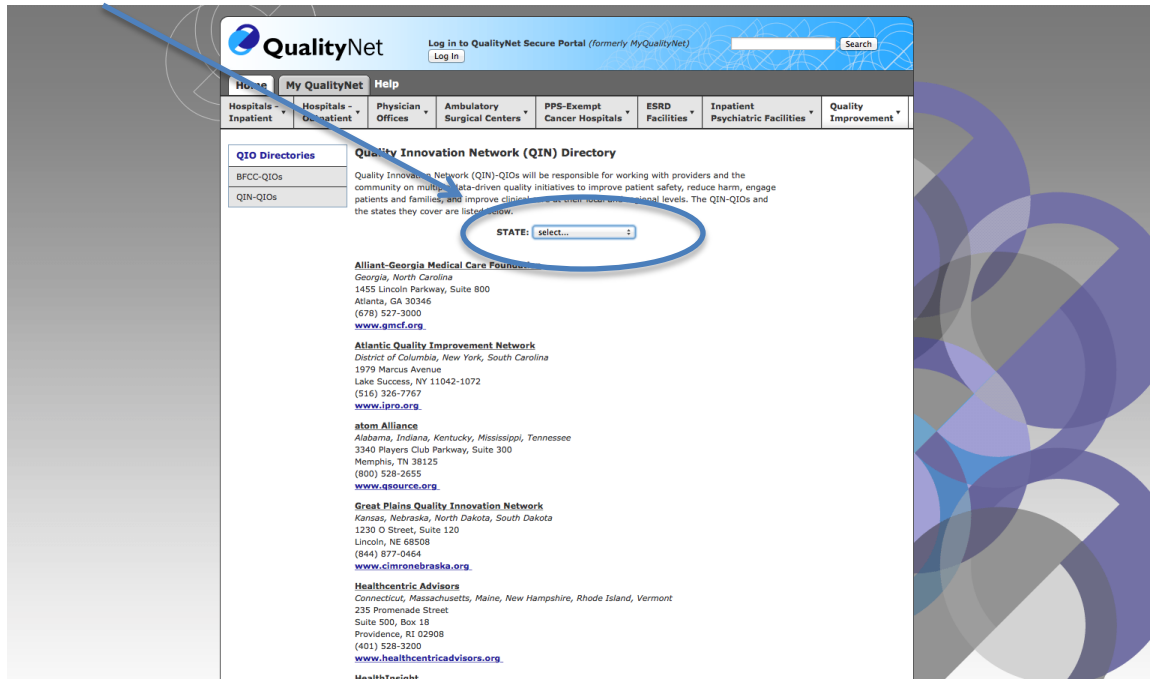
BPCC-QIOs  
 QIN-QIOs

A Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) consists of groups of doctors and health care experts to check on and improve the care given to people with Medicare. QIOs work under the direction of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to make health care more patient-centered, safer, and coordinated.

- Beneficiary and Family Centered Care (BFCC) QIOs - Handle beneficiary complaints, quality of care, and other types of cases.
- Quality Innovation Network (QIN) QIOs - Work with health care providers and the community on data-driven projects to improve patient safety, reduce costs and improve clinical care at the local level.

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4. When you click on the link you will be directed to a webpage that provides a directory of QIN-QIOs. Using the dropdown menu, select the specific state or territory that you desire information about:



5. You will be directed to a list of QIN-QIOs. The name of the QIN-QIO is listed first. The second line lists the specific states and/or territories that the QIN-QIO is contracted with CMS to target.
6. Once you identify the QIN-QIO that services your area, click on the link to that specific QIN-QIO. Once at the webpage of the QIN-QIO, you will find information about contact information, office locations, and current quality improvement initiatives:

Example:      Maryland

- a. The 2014 QIN-QIO directory for Maryland sends you to a QIN-QIO by the name of "VHQC". Click on the VHQC link.

**Health Services Advisory Group**  
Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio, Virgin Islands  
3133 East Camelback Road, Suite 100  
Phoenix, AZ 85016-4545  
(602) 801-6600  
[www.hsag.com](http://www.hsag.com)

**Lake Superior Quality Innovation Network**  
Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin  
2901 Metro Drive, Suite 400  
Bloomington, MN 55425-1525  
(952) 853-8536  
[www.stratishhealth.org](http://www.stratishhealth.org)

**Mountain Pacific Quality Health Foundation**  
Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Wyoming  
3404 Cooney Drive  
Helena, MT 59602  
(800) 497-8232  
[www.mpqhf.org](http://www.mpqhf.org)


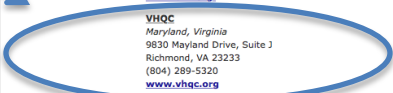
**Qualis Health**  
Idaho, Washington  
10700 Meridian Ave N, Suite 100  
Seattle, WA 98133  
(800) 949-7536  
[www.qualishealth.org](http://www.qualishealth.org)

**Quality Insights Quality Innovation Network**  
Delaware, Louisiana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia  
3001 Chesterfield Avenue  
Charleston, West Virginia 25304  
(304) 346-9864  
[www.qualityinsights-qin.org](http://www.qualityinsights-qin.org)


**Telligen**  
Colorado, Iowa, Illinois  
1776 West Lakes Parkway  
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266  
(800) 383-2856  
[www.telligen.org](http://www.telligen.org)

**TMF**  
Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Texas  
5918 West Courtyard Drive  
Austin, TX 78730-5036  
(800) 725-9216  
[www.tmf.org](http://www.tmf.org)

**VHQC**  
Maryland, Virginia  
9830 Mayland Drive, Suite J  
Richmond, VA 23233  
(804) 289-5320  
[www.vhqc.org](http://www.vhqc.org)


b. Once at the VHQC webpage, click on “Contact” at the top of the page.



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to Better Healthcare



**Maryland&Virginia**  
Quality Innovation Network

As Virginia's QIO, we convene providers, practitioners and patients to build and share knowledge, spread best practices and achieve rapid, wide-scale improvements in patient care.


[VISIT VIRGINIA QIO >](#)

**VirginiaHIT**  
REACH. CHANGING LIVES.

VHIT supports primary care providers as they implement an EHR system, integrate it into the patient care process and achieve meaningful use.

[VISIT VIRGINIA HIT >](#)

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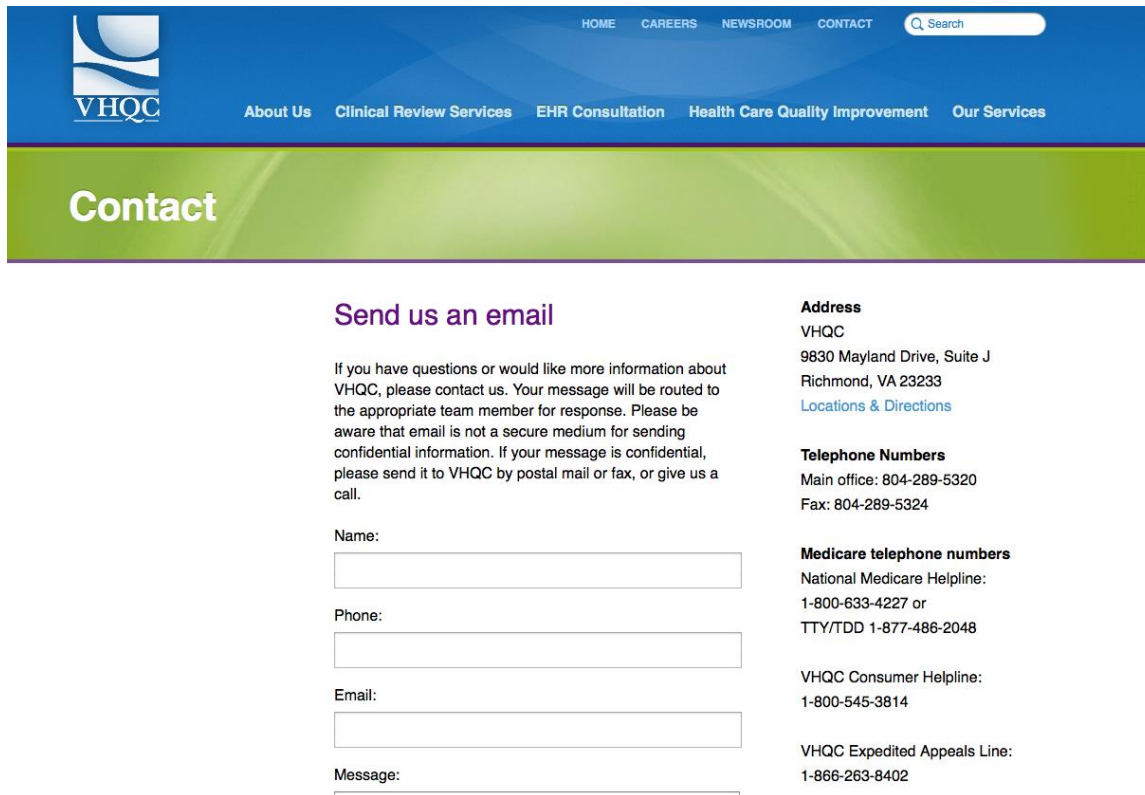
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9830 Mayland Drive, Suite J - Richmond, VA 23233 - 804-289-5320 (phone) - 804-289-5324 (fax)

[Team Member Login](#)

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- c. Clicking on the “Contact” link will provide the current list of office and phone contact information for the QIN-QIO:



The screenshot shows the VHQC (Virginia Health Quality Care) website's contact page. The header is blue with the VHQC logo on the left and navigation links (HOME, CAREERS, NEWSROOM, CONTACT) on the right. Below the header is a green banner with the word "Contact" in white. The main content area is white and contains a "Send us an email" section with a paragraph of text, a form for Name, Phone, Email, and Message, and contact information for Address, Telephone Numbers, and Medicare telephone numbers.

**Send us an email**

If you have questions or would like more information about VHQC, please contact us. Your message will be routed to the appropriate team member for response. Please be aware that email is not a secure medium for sending confidential information. If your message is confidential, please send it to VHQC by postal mail or fax, or give us a call.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Message:

**Address**  
VHQC  
9830 Mayland Drive, Suite J  
Richmond, VA 23233  
[Locations & Directions](#)

**Telephone Numbers**  
Main office: 804-289-5320  
Fax: 804-289-5324

**Medicare telephone numbers**  
National Medicare Helpline:  
1-800-633-4227 or  
TTY/TDD 1-877-486-2048

VHQC Consumer Helpline:  
1-800-545-3814

VHQC Expedited Appeals Line:  
1-866-263-8402