CMS’s Monitoring Activities for Ensuring That Medicare Accountable Care Organizations Report Complete and Accurate Data on Quality Measures Were Generally Effective, but There Were Weaknesses That Could Be Improved

What OIG Found
CMS’s monitoring activities were generally effective for ensuring that ACOs report complete and accurate data on quality measures through claims and administrative data and the CMS web portal. (For example, ACOs report data through the web portal on whether beneficiaries received preventive care, such as depression screenings.) However, we identified weaknesses in CMS’s monitoring activities that could lead to ACOs reporting incomplete or inaccurate data through the patient survey. Specifically, CMS did not ensure that its contractor: (1) verified survey vendors’ correction of identified issues that directly relate to the collection or reporting of data; (2) confirmed that all implemented changes to address identified issues are included in Quality Assurance Plans (QAPs) all of the changes implemented to address identified issues. (A QAP describes a survey vendor’s process for performing the patient survey and complying with the CMS Quality Assurance Guidelines.) In addition, CMS did not ensure that its contractor reviewed survey instruments (e.g., mail survey packages) translated into other languages. As a result of these weaknesses, ACOs may not report complete and accurate data on quality measures, which could affect the ACOs’ overall quality performance scores and ultimately the shared savings payments.

What OIG Recommends and CMS Comments
To improve its monitoring activities for ensuring that ACOs report complete and accurate data on quality measures, we recommend that CMS update the Statement of Work to require its contractor to: (1) verify that survey vendors correct identified issues that directly relate to the collection or reporting of data; (2) confirm that all implemented changes to address the identified issues are included in QAPs all of the changes implemented to address identified issues and (3) review the translated survey templates, mail survey packages, and telephone survey scripts to ensure that they are consistent with the English versions.

CMS concurred with our recommendations and described actions that it had taken or planned to take to address our recommendations. For each recommendation, CMS stated that it will review current contractor requirements and incorporate updates within the scope of the contract as needed to address the related finding.

The full report can be found at https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region9/91803033.asp.