



Board of Directors

Meeting Agenda Packet

September 14, 2026



Board of Directors

Michael Pacheco, Chair
Jeffrey D. Griffith, EMT-P, Vice Chair
Linda Greer, RN, Treasurer
Theresa Corrales, RN, Secretary
John Clark, Director
Laurie Edwards-Tate, MS, Director
Abbi Jahaaski, MSN, BSN, RN, Director

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors are held on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., unless indicated otherwise.

For an agenda, locations or further information please visit our website at www.palomarhealth.org, or call (760) 740-6375

Our Mission

Palomar Health District is dedicated to the health and well-being of our community through leadership, advocacy, and connection.

Our Vision

Advancing community health across the lifespan.

Our Values

Accessibility
Excellence

Collaboration
Integrity

Compassion
Trust

Posted
Friday,
September 11, 2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Agenda

Monday, September 14, 2026
6:30 p.m.

Please see page 3 of agenda for meeting location

	<i>The Board may take action on any of the items listed below, including items specifically labeled "Informational Only"</i>	Time	Target
Call To Order			6:30
I.	Establishment of Quorum	1	6:31
II.	Opening Ceremony	4	6:35
	A. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag		
III.	Public Comments¹	30	7:05
IV.	JPA Legislative Update	10	7:15
V.	District Legal Review	10	7:25
VI.	Presentations – Informational Only	10	7:35
	A. Patient Experience Presentation		
VII.	Approval of Minutes (ADD A)	5	7:40
	A. Regular Session Board of Directors Meeting – August 10, 2026 (Pp 7-13)		

VIII.	Approval of Agenda to accept the Consent Items as listed <i>(ADD B)</i>	5	7:45
	A. Hospital Equity Report and Improvement Plan – Escondido <i>(Pp 15-27)</i> B. Hospital Equity Report and Improvement Plan – Poway <i>(Pp 28-40)</i> C. Hospital Equity Report and Improvement Plan – Palomar Health <i>(Pp 41-55)</i>		
IX.	Reports – Informational Only		
	A. Palomar Health Support Staff – Kristin Gaspar and/or Sheila Brown	5	7:50
	B. Chair of the Board – Michael Pacheco	5	7:55
X.	Adjournment to Closed Session	27	8:22
	A. Pursuant to California Government Code § 54962 and California Health & Safety Code § 32106— REPORT INVOLVING TRADE SECRET—Discussion will concern Potential New Program. Estimated date of public disclosure: September 14, 2027		
XI.	Re-Adjournment to Open Session	1	8:23
XII.	Action Resulting from Closed Session – if any	1	8:24
XIII.	Request for Agenda Items for Consideration	5	8:29
Final Adjournment			8:30

NOTE: If you need special assistance to participate in the meeting, please call 760.740.6375 with requests 48 hours prior to the event, so we may provide reasonable accommodations.

¹ 3 minutes allowed per speaker. For further details, see Request for Public Comment Process and Policy on page 4 of agenda.

Board of Directors Meeting Location Options

**Linda Greer Board Room, Suite 300
2125 Citracado Parkway, Escondido, CA 92029**

- Elected Board Members of the Palomar Health Board of Directors will attend at this location, unless otherwise noticed below
- Non-Board member attendees, and members of the public may also attend at this location

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting?rtc=1>

Meeting ID: 265 833 941 875 61

Passcode: Gn3EG7xv

or

Dial in using your phone at 929.352.2216; Access Code: 505 548 779#¹

- Non-Board member attendees, and members of the public may also attend the meeting virtually utilizing the above link
- An elected member of the Board of Directors will be attending the meeting virtually from these locations

¹ New to Microsoft Teams? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: [Download Teams](#)

Source:

Applies to Facilities:
All Palomar Health FacilitiesApplies to Departments:
Board of Directors

Policy : Public Comments and Attendance at Public Board Meetings

I. SUMMARY/INTENT:

A. It is the intention of the Palomar Health Board of Directors to hear public comment about any topic that is under its jurisdiction. This policy is intended to provide guidelines in the interest of conducting orderly, open public meetings while ensuring that the public is afforded ample opportunity to attend and to address the board at any meetings of the whole board or board committees.

II. DEFINITIONS:

A. None defined.

III. POLICY: COMPLIANCE - KEY ELEMENTS:

- A. There will be one time period allotted for public comment at the start of the public meeting. Should the chair determine that further public comment is required during a public meeting, the chair can call for such additional public comment immediately prior to the adjournment of the public meeting. Members of the public who wish to address the Board are asked to complete a [Request for Public Comment form](#) and submit to the Board Assistant prior to or during the meeting. The information requested shall be limited to name, address, phone number and subject, however, the requesting public member shall submit the requested information voluntarily. It will not be a condition of speaking.
- B. Should Board action be requested, it is encouraged that the public requestor include the request on the *Request for Public Comment* as well. Any member of the public who is speaking is encouraged to submit written copies of the presentation.
- C. The subject matter of any speaker must be germane to Palomar Health's jurisdiction.
- D. Based solely on the number of speaking requests, the Board will set the time allowed for each speaker prior to the public sections of the meeting, but usually will not exceed 3 minutes per speaker, with a cumulative total of thirty minutes.
- E. Questions or comments will be entertained during the "Public Comments" section on the agenda. All public comments will be limited to the designated times, including at all board meetings, committee meetings and board workshops.
- F. All voting and non-voting members of a Board committee will be seated at the table. Name placards will be created as placeholders for those seats for Board members, committee members, staff, and scribes. Any other attendees, staff or public, are welcome to sit at seats that do not have name placards, as well as on any other chairs in the room. For Palomar Health Board meetings, members of the public will sit in a seating area designated for the public.
- G. In the event of a disturbance that is sufficient to impede the proceedings, all persons may be excluded with the exception of newspaper personnel who were not involved in the disturbance in question.
- H. The public shall be afforded those rights listed below (Government Code Section 54953 and 54954).
1. To receive appropriate notice of meetings;
 2. To attend with no pre-conditions to attendance;
 3. To testify within reasonable limits prior to ordering consideration of the subject in question;
 4. To know the result of any ballots cast;
 5. To broadcast or record proceedings (conditional on lack of disruption to meeting);
 6. To review recordings of meetings within thirty days of recording; minutes to be Board approved before release,
 7. To publicly criticize Palomar Health or the Board; and
 8. To review without delay agendas of all public meetings and any other writings distributed at the meeting.
- I. This policy will be reviewed and updated as required or at least every three years.

Regular Session Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.



[Request for Public Comments](#)

If you would like to make a public comment, submit your request by doing the following:

- **In Person: Submit a Public Comment Form, or verbally submit a request, to the Board Clerk**
- **Virtual: Enter your name and “Public Comment” in the chat function**

Those who submit a request will be called on during the Public Comments section and given 3 minutes to speak.

Public Comments Process

Pursuant to the Brown Act, the Board of Directors can only take action on items listed on the posted agenda. To ensure comments from the public can be made, there is a 30 minute public comments period at the beginning of the meeting. Each speaker who has requested to make a comment is granted three (3) minutes to speak. The public comment period is an opportunity to address the Board of Directors on agenda items or items of general interest within the subject matter jurisdiction of Palomar Health.

ADDENDUM A

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Monday, August 10, 2026

Agenda Item

• **Discussion**

Conclusion/Action/Follow Up

Notice of Meeting

Notice of Meeting was posted at the Palomar UC San Diego Health Administrative Office at 2125 Citracado Parkway, Escondido, CA. 92029, as well as on the Palomar Health website, on Friday, August 7, 2026 and Amended on Monday, August 10, 2026 which is consistent with legal requirements.

Call To Order

The meeting, which was held at Palomar UC San Diego Health Medical Center Escondido First Floor Conference Room at 2185 Citracado Parkway, Escondido, CA. 92029, and virtually was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Director Pacheco.

I. Establishment of Quorum

Quorum was established via roll call comprising of Directors Clark; Corrales; Edwards-Tate; Greer; Griffith; Pacheco
Absence(s): Director Jahaaski

II. Opening Ceremony

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison led by Director Greer.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Monday, August 10, 2026	
Agenda Item	
Discussion	Conclusion/Action/Follow Up
III. Public Comments	
No Public Comments	
IV. Presentations – Informational Only	
- This item was moved to after agenda item V. Legislative Update - Video of Jordan Pitt who was previously highlighted at the Trauma Survivors event was shown	
V. Legislative Update	
- Diane Hansen, Chief Executive Officer of the Palomar UCSD Health Authority and Patty Maysent, Chief Executive Officer of UC San Diego Health shared information on the legislative update regarding assets and the JPA including the plan for upcoming Public Hearing(s) and answered questions of the Palomar Health Board Directors that were present. - Discussion ensued.	

<i>Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Monday, August 10, 2026</i>	
<i>Agenda Item</i>	
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Conclusion/Action/Follow Up</i>
VI. Approval of Minutes	
A. Regular Session Board of Directors Meeting - July 13, 2026 B. Special Session Board of Directors Meeting – July 22, 2026 C. Special Session Board of Directors Meeting – July 27, 2026 D. Special Session Board of Directors Meeting – August 5, 2026	MOTION: By Director Griffith, 2nd by Director Edwards-Tate and carried to approve all presented minutes as a slate which included the July 13, 2026 Regular Session Board of Directors Meeting, the July 22, 2026 Special Session Board of Directors Meeting, and the June 27, 2026 Special Session Board of Directors Meeting, and the August 5, 2026 Special Session Board of Directors Meeting minutes as written. Roll call voting was utilized. Director Clark – aye Director Corrales – aye Director Edwards-Tate – aye Director Greer – aye Director Griffith – aye Director Jahaaski – absent Director Pacheco – aye Board Chair Michael Pacheco announced that five (5) board members were in favor. None (0) opposed. No abstention(s). One (1) absent. Motion approved.
No discussion	

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Monday, August 10, 2026	
Agenda Item	
Discussion	Conclusion/Action/Follow Up
VII. Approval of Agenda	
A. Resolution 08.10.26(03)-12 of Palomar Health Consenting to Articles Amendments of Palomar Health Foundation	MOTION: By Director Edwards-Tate, 2nd by Director Clark and carried to approve Resolution 08.10.26(03)-12 of Palomar Health Board of Directors Consenting to Articles Amendments of Palomar Health Foundation as presented Roll call voting was utilized. Director Clark – aye Director Corrales – aye Director Edwards-Tate – aye Director Greer – aye Director Griffith – aye Director Jahaaski – absent Director Pacheco – aye Board Chair Michael Pacheco announced that five (5) board members were in favor. None (0) opposed. No abstention(s). One (1) absent. Motion approved.
David Holtzman reviewed the resolution which is part of the JPA closing items and requests the Palomar Health Board of Directors’ approval to submit to the Secretary of State and answered questions.	
VIII. Reports – Informational Only	
A. Palomar Health Support Staff – Kristin Gaspar and/or Sheila Brown	
Verbal report was provided	
B. Chair of the Board – Michael Pacheco	
Verbal report was provided	

<i>Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Monday, August 10, 2026</i>	
<i>Agenda Item</i>	
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Conclusion/Action/Follow Up</i>
IX. Approval of Bylaws, Charters, Resolutions, and Other Actions	
A. Policy 27092 Annual Adoption of Statement of Investment B. Resolution 08.10.26(01)-10 of the Board of Directors of Palomar Health Concerning the Levy & Collection of Taxes by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 to Pay Principal & Interest on General Obligation Bonds & Authorizing the Taking of All Actions Necessary in Connection Therewith C. Resolution 08.10.26(02)-11 of the Board of Directors of Palomar Health Establishing the Appropriations Limit of the District for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 – July 30, 2027 D. Resolution 08.10.26(04)-13 of the Board of Directors of Palomar Health Authorizing and Appointing Signatories on Behalf of Palomar Health	MOTION: By Director Greer, 2nd by Director Clark and carried to approve items A. through D. which includes the Annual Adoption of Investment Policy, Resolution 08.10.26(01)-10 of the Board of Directors of Palomar Health Concerning the Levy & Collection of Taxes by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 to Pay Principal & Interest on General Obligation Bonds & Authorizing the Taking of All Actions Necessary in Connection Therewith, Resolution 08.10.26(02)-11 of the Board of Directors of Palomar Health Establishing the Appropriations Limit of the District for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 – July 30, 2027, and Resolution 08.10.26(04)-13 of the Board of Directors of Palomar Health Authorizing and Appointing Signatories on Behalf of Palomar Health as presented. Roll call voting was utilized. Director Clark – aye Director Corrales – aye Director Edwards-Tate – aye Director Greer – aye Director Griffith – aye Director Jahaaski – absent Director Pacheco – aye Board Chair Michael Pacheco announced that five (5) board members were in favor. None (0) opposed. No abstention(s). One (1) absent. Motion approved.
David Holtzman, Kevin DeBruin, and Andrew Tokar reviewed the policy, three resolutions, and answered questions.	

<i>Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Monday, August 10, 2026</i>	
<i>Agenda Item</i>	
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Conclusion/Action/Follow Up</i>
E. Policy Palomar Health Conflict of Interest	
- David Holtzman shared that due to changes a request for exemption of this bi-annual requirement is in process. - No action needed.	
E. Approval of Proposal for Phase 2 – Work Planning Services	MOTION: By Director Greer, 2nd by Director Corrales and carried to approve Approval of Proposal for Phase 2 – Work Planning Services Roll call voting was utilized. Director Clark – nay Director Corrales – aye Director Edwards-Tate – nay Director Greer – aye Director Griffith – nay Director Jahaaski – absent Director Pacheco – aye Board Chair Michael Pacheco announced that three (3) board members were in favor. Three (3) opposed. No (0) abstention(s). One (1) absent. Motion not approved
Discussion ensued	

<i>Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Monday, August 10, 2026</i>	
<i>Agenda Item</i>	
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Conclusion/Action/Follow Up</i>
X. Request for Agenda Items for Consideration	
Director Pacheco reminded the Board Directors to send any proposed agenda items to himself or Janet Kren for consideration.	
Final Adjournment	
There being no further business, Director Michael Pacheco adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.	

Signatures:	Board Secretary	_____ Terry Corrales, R.N.
	Board Clerk	_____ Janet Kren

ADDENDUM B

Hospital Equity Report User Input Template

This template lists the fields that require manual user input to complete the HCAI Hospital Equity Reports using HQI's AB 1204 Equity Report Solution. Just type or click your responses below for easy copying and pasting into the Equity Report section of HQIP when you are ready to generate your final csv report for uploading HCAI's HDC Portal.

The Equity Report section of HQIP is also where you will find the Top 10 Disparities identified for your hospital/system available for download and companion use with this template.

The HQIP Hospital Equity Report - User Guide on HQI's AB 1204 Hospital Equity Reporting Support page helps you navigate the HQIP Equity Reporting process: <https://hqinstitute.org/support-for-mandatory-health-equity-reporting/>

For questions or problems completing this template, email The HQI Analytics Team: hqianalytics@hqinstitute.org

Report Web Address & The Joint Commission Yes/No Structural Measures

Type or select your response to each item in the field provided.

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

1. Web Address: What is the web address where your hospital/system equity report will be published on your website? (200 characters max)	
https://palomarhealthdistrict.org	
2. Health Equity Lead: Does your hospital/system have a designated individual who leads hospital/system health equity activities? (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Discrimination Policy: Does your hospital/system provide documentation of your policy prohibiting discrimination? (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No

Health Equity Plan and Performance across Six Priority Areas

Type your response to each item in the field provided.

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

4. Heath Equity Plan: What actions will your hospital/system take to address *each* of your Top 10 disparities, including population impact, measurable objectives, and specific timeframes? (5000 characters max)

Palomar noted that the disparities for Palomar Escondido were readmissions by age, race, and financial grouping. We noticed that the data for 2025 had additionally added self-pay as a reference group. Based on readmissions from data from 2024 and the continued disparity for readmissions for 2025 the team reviewed the CMS Guide for reducing disparities in readmissions from 2024 to help guide their improvement process.

Palomar will apply a system wide approach based on the CMS guidelines from 2024.

Readmission Disparity:

Key actions: The disparity for readmissions was shared with the Regulatory/Equity Committee members and further recommendations from that committee were made. Our initial action included reviewing the discharge planning process by nursing, providers and the coordination of post-discharge services by our case management team. Palomar has a multifaceted discharge planning process that includes medication reconciliation, patient and family education, and post discharge follow-up. Palomar has been tracking the initial case management assessment process for a year based on our action plan from last year's readmission opportunities. We have made steady improvements in overall compliance with identification within 48 hours of patient admission the need for either follow-up care and referrals as needed for services; to include home health or other outpatient services that would support the patient's recovery. The RNs continue to provide education to the SNFs on continuity of care to ensure that the next level of care is able to facilitate recommended care to avoid a readmission. Palomar Medical Center has worked with their SDOH screening and data infrastructure for referrals for patients that have been identified as having a social or economic disparity that may affect their recovery. As discharge appropriate referrals are placed with community resources to ensure that the patients receive the continuity of care needed to fully recover and to prevent readmission.

Palomar Escondido will continue to identify patients risk factors early in their admission to allow for early intervention to help prevent readmissions.

Palomar Escondido will continue to provide discharge material in an easily readable manner that has been individualized for the patient. The RN will continue to use the teach-back method during their discharge instruction process

Palomar Escondido will continue to engage the patients' caregivers as they understand the patient's unique needs and will help to ensure the discharge instructions are understood

Palomar Escondido will continue to engage community resources for those patients who require health care access to community help

Palomar Escondido will continue to conduct medication reconciliation upon discharge to ensure continuity of care with the patient's home medications.

Time frame and Objectives for readmission:

Reduce readmissions in disparity groups by greater than or equal to the disparity group by 3% in 12 months, and narrow the rate ratio gap by greater than or equal to 1% over 24 months

Improve initial CRM assessment within 48 hours to 95% within a year.

5. Person-Centered Care: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Person-Centered Care for the identified top 10 disparities:

The role of the professional nurse incorporates both the function of ensuring that patients' needs are met across settings and providers and facilitating the delivery of quality care. Professional nurses have the potential for significant contributions to patient-centered, and cost-effective care through care coordination for Palomar. Patients access the services of Palomar Medical Center(s) over their life span as they move through the wellness and illness/injury health care continuum. Palomar Medical Center(s) have health care providers that are able to coordinate the complete preventive and episodic needs of patients as they require throughout the continuum of their care. The primary goals for patient care, at Palomar Medical Center(s) continuum of care are as follows:

Match the individual patient's and family's needs with the appropriate level of preventive care, medical intervention and/or psycho-social services.

Coordinate care through integration of all systems such as wellness care, acute hospitalization, skilled nursing as well as home health and hospice care referrals as appropriate.

Provide seamless transfers within the Palomar Medical Center facilities:

Palomar Medical Center, Escondido nursing model for patient centered care is relationship-based care and nursing effectively communicates with patients when providing care, treatment, and services following this model. The nursing staff at Palomar Medical Center(s) have chosen the Relationship-Based Care model as its model of care because it best reflects the manner in which care is delivered to patients and their family members across the continuum. Relationship-Based Care is comprised of three crucial relationships:

The care provider's relationship with patients and families

The care provider's relationship with self

The care provider's relationship with colleagues

The provider relationship is one in which the care provider consistently maintains the patient and the family as his or her central focus. Compassion and care are conveyed through touch, a kind act, through competent clinical interventions, or through listening and seeking to understand the others experience. Relationship-Based Care refers to a philosophical foundation of the model and its operational framework. Healthcare is provided through relationships. All care practices visibly demonstrate the mission and values of Palomar, including those of clinicians and staff members from all disciplines, departments and services.

The patient and family are at the center of the Relationship-Based Care model. The following elements of the model promotes organizational health, clinical safety and quality, patient and family satisfaction, physician and staff satisfaction, and effective recruitment and retention:

Leadership - Leaders know the vision, act with purpose, remove barriers, and consistently hold patients, families, and staff as their priority.

Teamwork - Teamwork requires a group of diverse members from all disciplines and departments to define and embrace a shared purpose and to work together to fulfill that purpose.

Care Delivery - The patient care delivery system is the infrastructure for organizing and providing care to patients and families. The system determines the way in which the activities of care are accomplished and is built upon the concepts and values of professional nursing practice.

Professional Nursing - Professional nursing exists to provide compassionate care to individuals and their loved ones. Nursing is a primary component in a complex, interdependent health care delivery system.

Resources - A resource driven practice is one which maximizes all available resources: staff, time, equipment, systems, and budget.

Outcomes - Achieving quality outcomes requires planning precision and perseverance. It begins with defining specific, attainable and measurable outcomes.

The initial phase of relationship-based care is performed through the nursing assessment, which is performed within 24 hours of admission. Nursing identifies the patient's oral and written communication needs, including the patient's preferred language for discussing health care. This communication includes the need for personal devices such as hearing aids or glasses, language interpreters, communication boards, and translated or plain language materials. The nursing staff communicates with the patient during initial nursing assessment and provides the patient treatment, and services in a manner that meets their oral and written communication needs. Palomar Medical Center's medical record contains information that reflects the patient's care, treatment, services, race and ethnicity. Palomar Medical Center respects, protects, and promotes patient rights.

Palomar nursing standards also require care plans that are to be completed within 8 hours of admission and these care plans are individualized by the interdisciplinary team that contain specific, actionable information for staff across multiple care settings. These care plans promote communication and continuity of care/patient centered /relationship by suggesting communication strategies, treatment plans, and psychosocial resources.

Palomar Medical Center's Regulatory / Equity Committee reviews patient equity data to determine if they experience less safe or lower quality of care or poorer health outcomes associated with their race, ethnicity, language, disability, or sexual orientation. The Regulatory/Equity Committee reviews other factors, to document if these disparities in health care could be caused by cultural or language barriers that impair communication with caregivers, impeded access to care, or fear of discrimination. The goal of the Regulatory/Equity Committee is to address cultural, communication, mobility, SDOH, and other patient needs during their patient admission.

Goal and Time Frame:

Document teach back at discharge; ≥95%; patient/caregiver preferences integrated and documented by greater than or equal to 95% of the time maintain 12 months at 100%.

Increase care plan individualization per disparity group by greater than or equal to 95% of the time within 12 months and maintain 100%.

6. Patient Safety: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Medical Center, Escondido conducts a patient safety survey every other year and participates in Leap Frog. Palomar Medical Center Escondido received a grade B from Leap Frog for their data and processes for Spring of 2026. Palomar Medical Center Escondido has reviewed the opportunities that were identified and are working on process improvements related to surgical site infections and urinary tract infections. The overall data continued to show improvement in retained foreign items, accidental rents and tears in the procedural areas, respiratory issues, and kidney failures following procedures. For the safety related questions Palomar performed within the average hospital range for all the measures. The other measures Escondido performed within the expected average for all hospitals participating in Leap Frog. Palomar reviews overall readmission data at their Quality Committee quarterly. This information is shared with the care team and includes readmissions, reason for readmissions, and rate. Part of the discussions for how to reduce readmissions includes, medication reconciliation, access to care, were clear instructions provided, was discharge planning started on the first day of the admission, timely follow-up by providers, and access to a post discharge contact/what does the patient need to look for and who do they call. Palomar will continue to improve follow-up after hospital discharge to include connecting patients with community-based services, providers, and other treatment modalities to help prevent readmissions. The discharge paperwork and process were updated to include community resources, phone numbers, individualized education plan, and as needed referrals for outpatient services. The Case Management team developed a report that is sent via email to the leadership team to help provide oversight to ensure appropriate discharge planning is occurring.

Goal and Time Frame:

Palomar Health Escondido will ensure that the 10 top priorities, which include readmissions, meet all the requirements for Leapfrog's 30 national performance measures by the beginning of 2027 and that the measures put into place for safety at surgery will improve the Leap Frog score for Spring 2027 back to an A.

Initial case management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

7. Addressing Patient Social Drivers of Health: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

The patient's (SDOH) such as but not limited to access to transportation, difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills, education and literacy, food insecurity, and housing insecurity will be assessed on all patients. The process that is used to monitor and report progress is the Prapare form which was added to the initial nursing assessment. This process also is included in the Outpatient Departments to ensure that patients with limited resources have the support that they need. Once a positive result is documented by nursing there is an automatic referral process sent to the Case Management team. The Case Management ("CRM") team are able to interview the patient and determine what resources are needed for the patient's continuity of care. The case management team and nursing team worked with information technology and developed an electronic drop down of community resources and after care instructions that are tailored to meet the needs of the patient at discharge. The case management leadership team conducts monthly reviews to ensure consistent and individualized discharge planning is based on the patient's needs and diagnosis.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial case management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

8. Effective Treatment: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Medical Center Escondido has reviewed their process with care transitions from one setting to another setting within the facility. The nursing team determined that there are potential gaps when transferring patients care from one level of care to another, which include within the facility or to a SNF. The nursing staff has worked with the information technology team to improve their documentation for the following:

Identify patients at risk for ineffective transitions of care

Document within the EMR the transition assessment and hand off

Perform medication reconciliation for transitions of patient care and communicate to next care provider

Individualize a nursing care plan that addresses all care across the continuum

Communicate essential care to next level and to other team members to include CRM to help facilitate effective discharge planning to help to prevent readmissions

The readmission data has helped improve the care transitions from acute care to the ambulatory setting and enabled the CRM team to set up predischarge interventions while a patient, ensure patient/family education is in place and done, post discharge interventions done/to include outreach community programs, and ensuring medications are reconciled at discharge.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial case management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

9. Care Coordination: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Medical Center, Escondido will include the following processes for care coordination for the top 10 priorities.

Palomar Medical Center, Escondido's EMR has a robust discharge planning and patient education process that is addressed in their "adult inpatient standards".

Teach-back method: Nurses ensure the patient and caregivers understand their care plan, medications, and warning signs by having them repeat the information in their own words.

Clear instructions: Discharge instructions are provided in simple, understandable language, and provided in both written and digital formats.

Shared decision-making: Involve patients in their care from the time of admission to help them prepare for a smooth transition home.

Medication reconciliation: A medical staff-led review of all medications before discharge is performed to prevent missed, duplicate, or incorrect dosages, which can cause adverse events.

Adherence support: The CRM (case management team) initiate communication with the patient to ensure patients can access and adhere to their medication schedules, which can be done through pharmacist phone calls, automated reminders, and financial assistance.

Post-discharge support and communication.

Timely follow-up: The CRM and or nursing staff will schedule follow-up appointments with primary care providers (PCPs) or specialists within one week of discharge. This is performed at the time of discharge

Post-discharge contact: Depending on patient needs, there is a follow-up phone call from a nurse within 24–72 hours of discharge can assess the patient's condition and reinforce discharge instructions.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial case management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

10. Access to Care: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

CRM at Palomar provides follow-up for timely care, provides clear discharge instructions, and coordinated post-acute support from community resources. The CRM team continue to offer the patient:

Follow-up appointment made by CRM

Medication reconciliation and home medications

Social inequities which would make it difficult to continue with recovery, i.e., housing, rides, caregivers. CRM connects the patient to community resources

Education to include what to do and whom to call for worsening symptoms

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial case management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

System Description (only applies to system reports)

11. System Description: Describe your hospital system. Information reported may include but not limited to, providing an overview of your organizational structure, services, capacity, overall role within the healthcare landscape, ownership, geographic location, the full range of clinical and support services offered, and any distinguishing features that define the system's mission and impact. (5000 characters max)

Despite efforts to improve healthcare access and quality, hospitals continue to face challenges in achieving health equity. Disparities based on socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, and other social determinants persist, leading to differential healthcare outcomes among patient populations. Factors such as structural racism, implicit bias, inadequate cultural competency, and limited resources contribute to these disparities, posing significant challenges to equitable healthcare delivery. Palomar will play a crucial role in providing healthcare services to diverse populations. Achieving health equity will require identifying and addressing the systemic barriers that contribute to these disparities. Therefore, Palomar will document any patient's (SDOH) which may include, but not limited to, access to transportation, difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills, education and literacy, food insecurity, and housing insecurity will be assessed on inpatients. Palomar will include, but not be limited to, high-risk population of patients with diabetes, pregnant women, or homeless. If SDOH are identified, the patient will be provided information about community resources and support activities. Patients that have been screened for these social needs may have obstacles to high quality care which could contribute to poor health. Screening for these social determinants of health will be performed by nursing staff for inpatient admissions which will include the Obstetrical Unit. Palomar will use available data from the Prapare Screening Tool to help identify health care disparities in its patient population and prioritize which population(s) on which to focus. Palomar will conduct a stratification analysis using social demographic characteristics such as age, gender, preferred language, or race and ethnicity to better understand the specific disparities that may exist for the patient population.

Social Determinants PRAPARE section is addressed on the OB Admission History and Adult Inpatient History form

The RN fills out all the required fields within the form.

If a patient screens for any listed social determinants of health, a Case Resource Management consult order will automatically be placed:

In the past year, have you or any family members you live with been unable to get any of the following when it was really needed?"

Food Insecurity

Housing Instability

Transportation Needs

Utility Difficulties

Interpersonal safety

Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work, or from getting things needed for daily living?"

Yes, kept from getting to medical appointments/getting medications

Yes, kept from non-medical meetings, work, or necessities

If the stratified analyses show differences across groups, Palomar will work to understand the root cause of the differences

Equitable Access to Healthcare Services: Ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to healthcare services.

Cultural Competence and Linguistic Access: Promoting cultural competence and linguistic access within healthcare settings to ensure that healthcare providers can effectively communicate.

Community Engagement and Partnership: Engaging communities and partnering with community organizations, stakeholders, and policymakers to develop and implement strategies for promoting health equity.

Data Collection and Monitoring: Improving data collection and monitoring systems to track health disparities

Palomar will evaluate and revise their action plan as necessary. Leaders, providers, and staff will be informed at least annually on the progress to reduce identified health disparities.

Social Determinants PRAPARE section was added to the following outpatient areas for any patient over the age of 18:

Emergency Department, Infusion Therapy, Radiation Oncology, Wound Care and Hyperbaric therapy, Cardiac Rehab, Perinatal Services, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech/OP, Interventional Radiology, Cardiac Cath lab, and, OP OB Triage

Department of Health care Access and Information: Palomar, Escondido will collect hospital screening data for all patients that are 18 years or older for all five-health related social needs.

The number of patients admitted to the hospital who are 18 years or older at time of admission and who screened for all SDOH identified

The total number of patients who are admitted to the hospital who are 18 years or older on the date they are admitted

The percent of patients screened for all SDOH identified

Palomar Medical Center, Escondido does review data quarterly

Age Friendly Measures:

Eliciting Patient Healthcare Goals

This domain focuses on obtaining patients' health-related goals and treatment preferences which will inform shared decision-making goal concordant care

Responsible Medication Management

This domain aims to optimize medication management through monitoring of the pharmacological record for drugs that may be considered inappropriate in older adults due to increased harm

Frailty Screening and Interventions (i.e. Mobility, Mentation, and Malnutrition)

This domain aims to screen patients for geriatric issues related to frailty including cognitive impairment/delirium, physical function/mobility, and malnutrition for the purpose of early detection and intervention where appropriate

Social Vulnerability (social isolation, economic insecurity, ageism, limited access to healthcare, caregiver stress, elder abuse)

This domain seeks to ensure that hospitals recognize the importance of social vulnerability screening of older adults and have systems in place to ensure that social issues are identified and addressed as part of the care plan

Age-Friendly Leadership:

This domain seeks to ensure consistent quality of care for older adults through the identification of an age friendly champion and/or inter-professional committee tasked with ensuring compliance with all components of this measure

Palomar integrated the age friendly measures into existing documentation and will evaluate these strategies within the Health Care Equity Committee.

Palomar has set goals to create health processes that ensure every older adult receives the best care possible and:
 is not harmed by care
 is satisfied with the care they receive
 Palomar will screen patients ≥ 65 years of age for
 Medication, Mentation, Nutrition, and Mobility &
 Provide resource when patients meet screening criteria

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospital Commitment to Health Equity (HCHE) Structural Measure

The CMS Hospital Commitment to Health Equity (HCHE) Structural Measure consists of five Domains, each of which have from 1-5 attestations. Read all attestations for each domain. If **all** attestations within a domain are true for your hospital, select ‘**Yes**’ for the Domain (Yes/No). If **any** attestation is within a domain is not true for your hospital, select “**No**” for the Domain (Yes/No).

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types, the CMS HCHE Structural Measure is not required for hospital systems.

12. CMS HCHE Domain 1: Strategic Planning

Attestations

- i. Our hospital strategic plan identifies priority populations who currently experience health disparities.
- ii. Our hospital strategic plan identifies healthcare equity goals and discrete action steps to achieve these goals.
- iii. Our hospital strategic plan outlines specific resources that have been dedicated to achieving our equity goals.
- iv. Our hospital strategic plan describes our approach for engaging key stakeholders, such as community-based organizations.

Domain 1: Strategic Planning (Yes/No)

☒ Yes ☐ No

CMS HCHE Structural Measure (*continued*)

13. CMS HCHE Domain 2: Data Collection	
<i>Attestations</i>	
i. Our hospital collects demographic information, including self-reported race and ethnicity, and/or social determinant of health information on the majority of our patients. ii. Our hospital has training for staff in culturally sensitive collection of demographics and/or social determinant of health information. iii. Our hospital inputs demographic and/or social determinant of health information collected from patients into structured, interoperable data elements using a certified electronic health record (EHR) technology.	
Domain 2: Data Collection (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No
14. CMS HCHE Domain 3: Data Analysis	
<i>Attestation</i>	
i. Our hospital stratifies key performance indicators by demographic and/or social determinants of health variables to identify equity gaps and includes this information in hospital performance dashboards.	
Domain 3: Data Analysis (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No
15. CMS HCHE Domain 4: Quality Improvement	
<i>Attestation</i>	
i. Our hospital participates in local, regional, or national quality improvement activities focused on reducing health disparities.	
Domain 4: Quality Improvement (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No

CMS HCHE Structural Measure (*continued*)

16. CMS HCHE Domain 5: Leadership Engagement	
<i>Attestations</i>	
i. Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews our strategic plan for achieving health equity. ii. Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews key performance indicators stratified by demographic and/or social factors.	
Domain 5: Leadership Engagement (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No

CMS Screening for Social Drivers of Health (SDOH) and CMS Screen Positive Rate for SDOH and Intervention

The CMS Screening for Social Drivers of Health measure assesses whether a hospital implements screening for all patients that are 18 years or older at time of admission for all of the five-health-related social needs (HRSNs) including Food insecurity, Housing instability, Transportation problems, Utility difficulties, and Interpersonal safety. HQI will calculate the *rates* based on the numerators and denominators you provide. **If a value is unavailable or unknown, type '0' in the field.**

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

CMS SDOH Overall Screened	
17. Overall Screened Numerator: Number of patients admitted to an inpatient hospital stay who were 18 years or older on the date of admission and were <u>screened for all five HRSNs</u> . (9 digits max)	13,559
18. Overall Screened Denominator: Number of patients who were admitted to a hospital inpatient stay and who were 18 years or older on the date of admission. (9 digits max)	14,336
CMS SDOH Food Insecurity	
19. Food Insecurity Positives: Number of patients positive for food insecurity. (9 digits max)	241
20. Food Insecurity Interventions: Number of interventions provided for food insecurity. (9 digits max)	241

CMS Screening for Social Drivers of Health (SDOH) and CMS Screen Positive Rate for SDOH and Intervention (*continued*)

CMS SDOH Housing Instability	
21. Housing Instability <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for housing instability. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	854
22. Housing Instability <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for housing instability. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	854
CMS SDOH Transportation Problems	
23. Transportation Problems <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for transportation problems. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	378
24. Transportation Problems <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for transportation problems. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	378
CMS SDOH Utility Difficulties	
25. Utility Difficulties <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for utility difficulties. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	163
26. Utility Difficulties <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for utility difficulties. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	163
CMS SDOH Interpersonal Safety	
27. Interpersonal Safety <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for interpersonal safety. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	208
28. Interpersonal Safety <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for interpersonal safety. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	208

Hospital Equity Report User Input Template

This template lists the fields that require manual user input to complete the HCAI Hospital Equity Reports using HQI's AB 1204 Equity Report Solution. Just type or click your responses below for easy copying and pasting into the Equity Report section of HQIP when you are ready to generate your final csv report for uploading HCAI's HDC Portal.

The Equity Report section of HQIP is also where you will find the Top 10 Disparities identified for your hospital/system available for download and companion use with this template.

The HQIP Hospital Equity Report - User Guide on HQI's AB 1204 Hospital Equity Reporting Support page helps you navigate the HQIP Equity Reporting process: <https://hqinstitute.org/support-for-mandatory-health-equity-reporting/>

For questions or problems completing this template, email The HQI Analytics Team: hqianalytics@hqinstitute.org

Report Web Address & The Joint Commission Yes/No Structural Measures

Type or select your response to each item in the field provided.

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

1. Web Address: What is the web address where your hospital/system equity report will be published on your website? (200 characters max)	
https://palomarhealthdistrict.org	
2. Health Equity Lead: Does your hospital/system have a designated individual who leads hospital/system health equity activities? (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Discrimination Policy: Does your hospital/system provide documentation of your policy prohibiting discrimination? (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No

Health Equity Plan and Performance across Six Priority Areas

Type your response to each item in the field provided.

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

4. Heath Equity Plan: What actions will your hospital/system take to address *each* of your Top 10 disparities, including population impact, measurable objectives, and specific timeframes? (5000 characters max)

Palomar noted that the disparities for Palomar Poway were readmissions by age, race, and financial grouping. Based on readmissions from data from 2024 and the continued disparity for readmissions for 2025 the team reviewed the CMS Guide for reducing disparities in readmissions from 2024 to help guide their improvement process.

Palomar will apply a system wide approach based on the CMS guidelines from 2024.

Readmission Disparity:

Key actions: The disparity for readmissions was shared with the Regulatory/Equity Committee members and further recommendations from that committee were made. Our initial action included reviewing the discharge planning process by nursing, providers and the coordination of post - discharge services by our Case Management team. Palomar has a multifaceted discharge planning process that includes medication reconciliation, patient and family education, and post discharge follow-up. Palomar has been tracking the initial Case Management assessment process for a year based on our action plan from last year's readmission opportunities. We have made steady improvements in overall compliance with identification within 48 hours of patient admission the need for either follow-up care and referrals as needed for services; to include home health or other outpatient services that would support the patient's recovery. The RNs continue to provide education to the SNFs on continuity of care to ensure that the next level of care is able to facilitate recommended care to avoid a readmission. Palomar Medical Center has worked with their SDOH screening and data infrastructure for referrals for patients that have been identified as having a social or economic disparity that may affect their recovery. As discharge appropriate referrals are placed with community resources to ensure that the patient receives the continuity of care needed to fully recover and to prevent readmission.

Palomar Poway will continue to identify patients risk factors early in their admission to allow for early intervention to help prevent readmissions.

Palomar Poway will continue to provide discharge material in an easily readable manner that has been individualized for the patient. The RN will continue to use the teach-back method during their discharge instruction process

Palomar Poway will continue to engage the patients' caregivers as they understand the patient's unique needs and will help to ensure the discharge instructions are understood

Palomar Poway will continue to engage community resources for those patients who require health care access to community help

Palomar Poway will continue to conduct medication reconciliation upon discharge to ensure continuity of care with the patient's home medications.

Time frame and Objectives for readmission:

Reduce readmissions in disparity groups by greater than or equal to the disparity group by 3% in 12 months, and narrow the rate ratio gap by greater than or equal to 1% over 24 months

Improve initial CRM assessment within 48 hours to 95% within a year.

5. Person-Centered Care: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Person-Centered Care for the identified top 10 disparities:

The role of the professional nurse incorporates both the function of ensuring that patients' needs are met across settings and providers and facilitating the delivery of quality care. Professional nurses have the potential for significant contributions to patient-centered, and cost-effective care through care coordination for Palomar. Patients access the services of Palomar Medical Center(s) over their life span as they move through the wellness and illness/injury health care continuum. Palomar Medical Center(s) have health care providers that are able to coordinate the complete preventive and episodic needs of patients as they require throughout the continuum of their care. The primary goals for patient care, at Palomar Medical Center(s) continuum of care are as follows:

Match the individual patient's and family's needs with the appropriate level of preventive care, medical intervention and/or psycho-social services.

Coordinate care through integration of all systems such as wellness care, acute hospitalization, skilled nursing as well as home health and hospice care referrals as appropriate.

Provide seamless transfers within the Palomar Medical Center facilities:

Palomar Medical Center, Poway nursing model for patient centered care is relationship-based care and nursing effectively communicates with patients when providing care, treatment, and services following this model. The nursing staff at Palomar Medical Center(s) have chosen the Relationship-Based Care model as its model of care because it best reflects the manner in which care is delivered to patients and their family members across the continuum. Relationship-Based Care is comprised of three crucial relationships:

The care provider's relationship with patients and families

The care provider's relationship with self

The care provider's relationship with colleagues

The provider relationship is one in which the care provider consistently maintains the patient and the family as his or her central focus. Compassion and care are conveyed through touch, a kind act, through competent clinical interventions, or through listening and seeking to understand the others experience. Relationship-Based Care refers to a philosophical foundation of the model and its operational framework. Healthcare is provided through relationships. All care practices visibly demonstrate the mission and values of Palomar, including those of clinicians and staff members from all disciplines, departments and services.

The patient and family are at the center of the Relationship-Based Care model. The following elements of the model promotes organizational health, clinical safety and quality, patient and family satisfaction, physician and staff satisfaction, and effective recruitment and retention:

Leadership - Leaders know the vision, act with purpose, remove barriers, and consistently hold patients, families, and staff as their priority.

Teamwork - Teamwork requires a group of diverse members from all disciplines and departments to define and embrace a shared purpose and to work together to fulfill that purpose.

Care Delivery - The patient care delivery system is the infrastructure for organizing and providing care to patients and families. The system determines the way in which the activities of care are accomplished and is built upon the concepts and values of professional nursing practice.

Professional Nursing - Professional nursing exists to provide compassionate care to individuals and their loved ones. Nursing is a primary component in a complex, interdependent health care delivery system.

Resources - A resource driven practice is one which maximizes all available resources: staff, time, equipment, systems, and budget.

Outcomes - Achieving quality outcomes requires planning precision and perseverance. It begins with defining specific, attainable and measurable outcomes

The initial phase of relationship-based care is performed through the nursing assessment, which is performed within 24 hours of admission. Nursing identifies the patient's oral and written communication needs, including the patient's preferred language for discussing health care. This communication includes the need for personal devices such as hearing aids or glasses, language interpreters, communication boards, and translated or plain language materials. The nursing staff communicates with the patient during initial nursing assessment and provides the patient treatment, and services in a manner that meets their oral and written communication needs. Palomar Medical Center(s) medical record contains information that reflects the patient's care, treatment, services, race and ethnicity. Palomar Medical Center respects, protects, and promotes patient rights.

Palomar nursing standards also require care plans that are to be completed within 8 hours of admission and these care plans are individualized by the interdisciplinary team that contain specific, actionable information for staff across multiple care settings. These care plans promote communication and continuity of care/patient centered /relationship by suggesting communication strategies, treatment plans, and psychosocial resources.

Palomar Medical Center(s) Regulatory / Equity Committee reviews patient equity data to determine if they experience less safe or lower quality of care or poorer health outcomes associated with their race, ethnicity, language, disability, or sexual orientation. The Regulatory/Equity Committee reviews other factors, to document if these disparities in health care could be caused by cultural or language barriers that impair communication with caregivers, impeded access to care, or fear of discrimination. The goal of the Regulatory/Equity Committee is to address cultural, communication, mobility, SDOH, and other patient needs during their patient admission.

Goal and Time Frame:

Document teach back at discharge; ≥95%; patient/caregiver preferences integrated and documented by greater than or equal to 95% of the time maintain 12 months at 100%.

Increase care plan individualization per disparity group by greater than or equal to 95% of the time within 12 months and maintain 100%.

6. Patient Safety: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Medical Center, Poway conducts a patient safety survey every other year and participates in Leap Frog. Palomar Medical Center Poway received a grade B from Leap Frog for their data and processes for Spring of 2026. Palomar Medical Center Poway has reviewed the opportunities that were identified and are working on process improvements related to surgical site infections and urinary tract infections. The overall data continued to show improvement in retained foreign items, accidental rents and tears in the procedural areas, respiratory issues, and kidney failures following procedures. For the safety related questions Palomar performed within the average hospital range for all the measures. The other measures Poway performed within the expected average for all hospitals participating in Leap frog. Palomar reviews overall readmission data at their Quality Committee quarterly. This information is shared with the care team and includes readmissions, reason for readmissions, and rate. Part of the discussions for how to reduce readmissions includes, medication reconciliation, access to care, were clear instructions provided, was discharge planning started on the first day of the admission, timely follow-up by providers, and access to a post discharge contact/what does the patient need to look for and who do they call. Palomar will continue to improve follow-up after hospital discharge to include connecting patients with community-based services, providers, and other treatment modalities to help prevent readmissions. The discharge paperwork and process were updated to include community resources, phone numbers, individualized education plan, and as needed referrals for outpatient services. The Case Management team developed a report that is sent via email to the leadership team to help provide oversight to ensure appropriate discharge planning is occurring.

Goal and Time Frame:

Palomar Health Poway will ensure that the 10 top priorities, which include readmissions, meet all the requirements for Leapfrog's 30 national performance measures by the beginning of 2027 and that the measures put into place for safety at surgery will improve the Leap Frog score for Spring 2027 back to an A.

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

7. Addressing Patient Social Drivers of Health: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

The patient's (SDOH) such as but not limited to access to transportation, difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills, education and literacy, food insecurity, and housing insecurity will be assessed on all patients. The process that is used to monitor and report progress is the Prapare form which was added to the initial nursing assessment. This process also is included in the Outpatient Departments to ensure that patients with limited resources have the support that they need. Once a positive result is documented by nursing there is an automatic referral process sent to the Case Management team. The Case Management ("CRM") team are able to interview the patient and determine what resources are needed for the patient's continuity of care. The Case Management team and nursing team worked with information technology and developed an electronic drop down of community resources and after care instructions that are tailored to meet the needs of the patient at discharge. The Case Management leadership team conduct monthly reviews to ensure consistent and individualized discharge planning is based on the patient's needs and diagnosis.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

8. Effective Treatment: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Medical Center Poway has reviewed their process with care transitions from one setting to another setting within the facility. The nursing team determined that there are potential gaps when transferring patients care from one level of care to another, which include within the facility or to a SNF. The nursing staff has worked with the information technology team to improve their documentation for the following:

Identify patients at risk for ineffective transitions of care

Document within the EMR the transition assessment and hand off

Perform medication reconciliation for transitions of patient care and communicate to next care provider

Individualize a nursing care plan that addresses all care across the continuum

Communicate essential care to next level and to other team members to include CRM to help facilitate effective discharge planning to help to prevent readmissions

The readmission data has helped improve the care transitions from acute care to the ambulatory setting and enabled the CRM team to set up predischage interventions with a patient, ensure patient/family education is in place and done, post discharge interventions done/to include outreach community programs, and ensuring medications are reconciled at discharge.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

9. Care Coordination: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Medical Center, Poway will include the following processes for care coordination for the top 10 priorities.

Palomar Medical Center, Poway's EMR has a robust discharge planning and patient education process that is addressed in their "adult inpatient standards".

Teach-back method: Nurses ensure the patient and caregivers understand their care plan, medications, and warning signs by having them repeat the information in their own words.

Clear instructions: Discharge instructions are provided in simple, understandable language, and provided in both written and digital formats.

Shared decision-making: Involve patients in their care from the time of admission to help them prepare for a smooth transition home.

Medication reconciliation: A medical staff-led review of all medications before discharge is performed to prevent missed, duplicate, or incorrect dosages, which can cause adverse events.

Adherence support: The CRM (Case Management team) initiate communication with the patient to ensure patients can access and adhere to their medication schedules, which can be done through pharmacist phone calls, automated reminders, and financial assistance.

Post-discharge support and communication

Timely follow-up: The CRM and or nursing staff will schedule follow-up appointments with primary care providers (PCPs) or specialists within one week of discharge. This is performed at the time of discharge

Post-discharge contact: Depending on patient needs, there is a follow-up phone call from a nurse within 24–72 hours of discharge can assess the patient's condition and reinforce discharge instructions.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

10. Access to Care: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

CRM at Palomar provides follow-up for timely care, provides clear discharge instructions, and coordinated post-acute support from community resources. The CRM team continue to offer the patient:

Follow-up appointment made by CRM

Medication reconciliation and home medications

Social inequities which would make it difficult to continue with recovery, i.e., housing, rides, caregivers. CRM connects the patient to community resources

Education to include what to do and whom to call for worsening symptoms

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

System Description (only applies to system reports)

11. System Description: Describe your hospital system. Information reported may include but not limited to, providing an overview of your organizational structure, services, capacity, overall role within the healthcare landscape, ownership, geographic location, the full range of clinical and support services offered, and any distinguishing features that define the system's mission and impact. (5000 characters max)

Despite efforts to improve healthcare access and quality, hospitals continue to face challenges in achieving health equity. Disparities based on socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, and other social determinants persist, leading to differential healthcare outcomes among patient populations. Factors such as structural racism, implicit bias, inadequate cultural competency, and limited resources contribute to these disparities, posing significant challenges to equitable healthcare delivery. Palomar will play a crucial role in providing healthcare services to diverse populations. Achieving health equity will require identifying and addressing the systemic barriers that contribute to these disparities.

Therefore, Palomar will document any patient's (SDOH) which may include, but not limited to, access to transportation, difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills, education and literacy, food insecurity, and housing insecurity will be assessed on inpatients. Palomar will include, but not be limited to, high-risk population of patients with diabetes, pregnant women, or homeless. If SDOH are identified, the patient will be provided information about community resources and support activities. Patients that have been screened for these social needs may have obstacles to high quality care which could contribute to poor health. Screening for these social determinants of health will be performed by nursing staff for inpatient admissions which will include the Obstetrical Unit. Palomar will use available data from the Prapare Screening Tool to help identify health care disparities in its patient population and prioritize which population(s) on which to focus. Palomar will conduct a stratification analysis using social demographic characteristics such as age, gender, preferred language, or race and ethnicity to better understand the specific disparities that may exist for the patient population.

Social Determinants PRAPARE section is addressed on the OB Admission History and Adult Inpatient History form

The RN fills out all the required fields within the form.

If a patient screens for any listed social determinants of health, a Case Resource Management consult order will automatically be placed:

In the past year, have you or any family members you live with been unable to get any of the following when it was really needed?"

Food Insecurity

Housing Instability

Transportation Needs

Utility Difficulties

Interpersonal safety

Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work, or from getting things needed for daily living?"

Yes, kept from getting to medical appointments/getting medications

Yes, kept from non-medical meetings, work, or necessities

If the stratified analyses show differences across groups, Palomar will work to understand the root cause of the differences

Equitable Access to Healthcare Services: Ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to healthcare services.

Cultural Competence and Linguistic Access: Promoting cultural competence and linguistic access within healthcare settings to ensure that healthcare providers can effectively communicate.

Community Engagement and Partnership: Engaging communities and partnering with community organizations, stakeholders, and policymakers to develop and implement strategies for promoting health equity.

Data Collection and Monitoring: Improving data collection and monitoring systems to track health disparities

Palomar will evaluate and revise their action plan as necessary. Leaders, providers, and staff will be informed at least annually on the progress to reduce identified health disparities.

Social Determinants PRAPARE section was added to the following outpatient areas for any patient over the age of 18:

Emergency Department, Infusion Therapy, Radiation Oncology, Wound Care and Hyperbaric therapy, Cardiac Rehab, Perinatal Services, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech/OP, Interventional Radiology, Cardiac Cath lab, and, OP OB Triage

Department of Health care Access and Information: Palomar, Poway will collect hospital screening data for all patients that are 18 years or older for all five-health related social needs.

The number of patients admitted to the hospital who are 18 years or older at time of admission and who screened for all SDOH identified

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The percent of patients screened for all SDOH identified

Palomar Medical Center, Poway does review data quarterly

Age Friendly Measures:

Eliciting Patient Healthcare Goals

This domain focuses on obtaining patients' health-related goals and treatment preferences which will inform shared decision-making goal concordant care

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This domain aims to optimize medication management through monitoring of the pharmacological record for drugs that may be considered inappropriate in older adults due to increased harm

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This domain seeks to ensure that hospitals recognize the importance of social vulnerability screening of older adults and have systems in place to ensure that social issues are identified and addressed as part of the care plan

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This domain seeks to ensure consistent quality of care for older adults through the identification of an age friendly champion and/or inter-professional committee tasked with ensuring compliance with all components of this measure

Palomar integrated the age friendly measures into existing documentation and will evaluate these strategies within the Health Care Equity Committee.

Palomar has set goals to create health processes that ensure every older adult receives the best care possible and:

- is not harmed by care
- is satisfied with the care they receive

Palomar will screen patients ≥ 65 years of age for

Medication, Mentation, Nutrition, and Mobility &

Provide resource when patients meet screening criteria

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospital Commitment to Health Equity (HCHE) Structural Measure

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Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types, the CMS HCHE Structural Measure is not required for hospital systems.

12. CMS HCHE Domain 1: Strategic Planning	
<i>Attestations</i>	
i. Our hospital strategic plan identifies priority populations who currently experience health disparities. ii. Our hospital strategic plan identifies healthcare equity goals and discrete action steps to achieve these goals. iii. Our hospital strategic plan outlines specific resources that have been dedicated to achieving our equity goals. iv. Our hospital strategic plan describes our approach for engaging key stakeholders, such as community-based organizations.	
Domain 1: Strategic Planning (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No

13. CMS HCHE Domain 2: Data Collection	
<i>Attestations</i>	
i. Our hospital collects demographic information, including self-reported race and ethnicity, and/or social determinant of health information on the majority of our patients. ii. Our hospital has training for staff in culturally sensitive collection of demographics and/or social determinant of health information. iii. Our hospital inputs demographic and/or social determinant of health information collected from patients into structured, interoperable data elements using a certified electronic health record (EHR) technology.	

Domain 2: Data Collection (Yes/No)		☒ Yes ☐ No
14. CMS HCHE Domain 3: Data Analysis		
<i>Attestation</i>		
i. Our hospital stratifies key performance indicators by demographic and/or social determinants of health variables to identify equity gaps and includes this information in hospital performance dashboards.		
Domain 3: Data Analysis (Yes/No)		☒ Yes ☐ No
15. CMS HCHE Domain 4: Quality Improvement		
<i>Attestation</i>		
i. Our hospital participates in local, regional, or national quality improvement activities focused on reducing health disparities.		
Domain 4: Quality Improvement (Yes/No)		☒ Yes ☐ No
16. CMS HCHE Domain 5: Leadership Engagement		
<i>Attestations</i>		
i. Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews our strategic plan for achieving health equity.		
ii. Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews key performance indicators stratified by demographic and/or social factors.		
Domain 5: Leadership Engagement (Yes/No)		☒ Yes ☐ No

CMS Screening for Social Drivers of Health (SDOH) and CMS Screen Positive Rate for SDOH and Intervention

The CMS Screening for Social Drivers of Health measure assesses whether a hospital implements screening for all patients that are 18 years or older at time of admission for all of the five-health-related social needs (HRSNs) including Food insecurity, Housing instability, Transportation problems, Utility difficulties, and Interpersonal safety. HQI will calculate the *rates* based on the numerators and denominators you provide. **If a value is unavailable or unknown, type '0' in the field.**

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

CMS SDOH Overall Screened	
17. Overall Screened Numerator: Number of patients admitted to an inpatient hospital stay who were 18 years or older on the date of admission and were <u>screened for all five HRSNs</u> . (9 digits max)	3,221
18. Overall Screened Denominator: Number of patients who were admitted to a hospital inpatient stay and who were 18 years or older on the date of admission. (9 digits max)	3,400
CMS SDOH Food Insecurity	
19. Food Insecurity Positives: Number of patients positive for food insecurity. (9 digits max)	45
20. Food Insecurity Interventions: Number of interventions provided for food insecurity. (9 digits max)	45

CMS SDOH Housing Instability	
21. Housing Instability Positives: Number of patients positive for housing instability. (9 digits max)	169
22. Housing Instability Interventions: Number of interventions provided for housing instability. (9 digits max)	169
CMS SDOH Transportation Problems	
23. Transportation Problems Positives: Number of patients positive for transportation problems. (9 digits max)	78
24. Transportation Problems Interventions: Number of interventions provided for transportation problems. (9 digits max)	78
CMS SDOH Utility Difficulties	
25. Utility Difficulties Positives: Number of patients positive for utility difficulties. (9 digits max)	29
26. Utility Difficulties Interventions: Number of interventions provided for utility difficulties. (9 digits max)	29

CMS SDOH Interpersonal Safety	
27. Interpersonal Safety <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for interpersonal safety. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	46
28. Interpersonal Safety <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for interpersonal safety. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	46

Hospital Equity Report User Input Template

This template lists the fields that require manual user input to complete the HCAI Hospital Equity Reports using HQI's AB 1204 Equity Report Solution. Just type or click your responses below for easy copying and pasting into the Equity Report section of HQIP when you are ready to generate your final csv report for uploading HCAI's HDC Portal.

The Equity Report section of HQIP is also where you will find the Top 10 Disparities identified for your hospital/system available for download and companion use with this template.

The HQIP Hospital Equity Report - User Guide on HQI's AB 1204 Hospital Equity Reporting Support page helps you navigate the HQIP Equity Reporting process: <https://hqinstitute.org/support-for-mandatory-health-equity-reporting/>

For questions or problems completing this template, email The HQI Analytics Team: hqianalytics@hqinstitute.org

Report Web Address & The Joint Commission Yes/No Structural Measures

Type or select your response to each item in the field provided.

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

1. Web Address: What is the web address where your hospital/system equity report will be published on your website? (200 characters max)	
https://palomarhealthdistrict.org	
2. Health Equity Lead: Does your hospital/system have a designated individual who leads hospital/system health equity activities? (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Discrimination Policy: Does your hospital/system provide documentation of your policy prohibiting discrimination? (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No

Health Equity Plan and Performance across Six Priority Areas

Type your response to each item in the field provided.

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

4. Heath Equity Plan: What actions will your hospital/system take to address *each* of your Top 10 disparities, including population impact, measurable objectives, and specific timeframes? (5000 characters max)

The disparities for Palomar Health were readmissions focused on the behavioral health diagnosis and all cause readmission rate. Based on readmissions from data from 2024 and the continued disparity for readmissions for 2025 the team reviewed the CMS Guide for reducing disparities in all cause readmissions from 2024 to help guide their improvement process.

Palomar will apply a system wide approach based on the CMS guidelines from 2024 for all cause readmission. For behavioral health readmission rate the team and the behavioral health liaison from the ED determined that Palomar Health should continue with the following strategies:

Behavioral Health Readmission Data:

Key actions:

During discharge the attending psychiatrist and the behavioral health liaison provide individualized and bundled interventions upon discharge. These interventions include:

Patient education, wrap around service referrals, intensive outpatient referrals, making after care appointments for the patient, and follow up calls within 24 hours of discharge to answer questions regarding the patient's safety plan, issues with obtaining medications and any other concerns.

Conflict management is an important part of behavioral health recovery and the behavioral health liaison discusses conflict management skills with the family, patient, and incorporates these skills into the safety plan.

Patients and families receive education on interpersonal communication skills, healthy boundaries, empathy, and anger management as part of their discharge process.

The behavioral health liaison during their initial assessment also assesses for any dual diagnosis that would include a dual diagnosis of addiction and behavioral health diagnosis. These patients require dual services and the approach emphasizes coordination between treatment to prevent relapse and long-term outcomes.

Time frame and Objectives for behavioral health readmission:

Reduce readmission in disparity group by greater than or equal to the disparity group by 4% in 12 months, and narrow the rate ratio gap by greater than or equal to 1% over 24 months

Readmission Disparity:

Key actions: The disparity for readmissions was shared with the Regulatory/Equity Committee members and further recommendations from that committee were made. Our initial action included reviewing the discharge planning process by nursing, providers and the coordination of post - discharge services by our Case Management team. Palomar has a multifaceted discharge planning process that includes medication

reconciliation, patient and family education, and post discharge follow-up. Palomar has been tracking the initial Case Management assessment process for a year based on our action plan from last year's readmission opportunities. We have made steady improvements in overall compliance with identification within 48 hours of patient admission the need for either follow-up care and referrals as needed for services; to include home health or other outpatient services that would support the patient's recovery. The RNs continue to provide education to the SNFs on continuity of care to ensure that the next level of care is able to facilitate recommended care to avoid a readmission. Palomar Health has worked with their SDOH screening and data infrastructure for referrals for patients that have been identified as having a social or economic disparity that may affect their recovery. As discharge appropriate referrals are placed with community resources to ensure that the patient receives the continuity of care needed to fully recover and to prevent readmission.

Palomar Health will continue to identify patients risk factors early in their admission to allow for early intervention to help prevent readmissions. Palomar Health will continue to provide discharge material in an easily readable manner that has been individualized for the patient. The RN will continue to use the teach-back method during their discharge instruction process

Palomar Health will continue to engage the patients' caregivers as they understand the patient's unique needs and will help to ensure the discharge instructions are understood

Palomar Health will continue to engage community resources for those patients who require health care access to community help

Palomar Health will continue to conduct medication reconciliation upon discharge to ensure continuity of care with the patient's home medications.

Time frame and Objectives for readmission:

Reduce readmissions in disparity groups by greater than or equal to the disparity group by 3% in 12 months, and narrow the rate ratio gap by greater than or equal to 1% over 24 months

Improve initial CRM assessment within 48 hours to 95% within a year.

Palomar Health for PNM Mortality Rate:

By using our SDOH data, also determined the mortalities were not linked to socioeconomic factors, like income, insurance or homelessness.

Palomar Health reviewed the plan of care for patients admitted with pneumonia and ensured that they contained short- and long-term goals as noted below:

Patient will continue to have appropriate blood cultures drawn before the administration of an antibiotic, in ICU continue to implement the ventilator associated pneumonia bundles to include, head of bed elevated, daily sedation vacation, subglottic suctioning, appropriate blood cultures drawn before the administration of an antibiotic, implement the ventilator associated pneumonia bundles to include, head of bed elevated to 30 to 45 degrees, appropriate antibiotic selection based on antibiograms to cover typical, atypical, and potentially drug resistant pathogens, blood and sputum cultures before the first antibiotic dose, early ambulation, and aspiration precautions.

Time frame and Objectives for reducing PNM Mortality Rate:

Reduce PNM Mortality rate in disparity groups by greater than or equal to the disparity group by 5% in 12 months, and narrow the rate ratio gap by greater than or equal to 1% over 24 months.

Palomar Health System Vag Birth after C-Section:

This is a physician driven decision made with the physician and the patient and it is dependent upon many variables including the uterine incision type, how many C-Sections, emergency capabilities of the facility, and the patient's prior history. Based on ACOG VBAC guidelines a physician and an anesthesiologist must be immediately available during a trial of labor. The physician determines if the patient is appropriate for a trial of labor after a C-Section and the physician must ensure that there are immediate emergency capabilities, and the patient meets criteria for the trial.

Based on these guidelines the rate of VBACS increasing will be difficult to achieve since this is a physician driven decision:

Time frame and Objectives for increasing V-Bac rate

Goal:

Improve rate ratio from a 2.3 to a 2.1 over the next 12 months.

C-Section rate:

Palomar Health will continue to identify *Nulliparous, Term, Singleton, Vertex*, describing first-time pregnancies at ≥ 37 weeks with a single fetus in head-down position (NTSV) at the beginning of every shift during huddles, discuss strategies and barriers, RN staff are trained in spinning babies and discuss during huddle which RN is able to assist with positioning. The nursing unit has bundle birth information on huddle boards that RN staff review and look for ways to help with NTSV during labor, and they continue to report their NTSV rates and goals monthly at the OB Committee meeting.

Time frame and Objectives for decreasing C-Section rate:

Goal:

Improve rate ratio from a 2.3 to a 2.1 over the next 12 months and the disparity rate by 1% over the next 12 months. The current overall C-Section rate is 25% and the C/S NTSV is 21.2%

5. Person-Centered Care: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Person-Centered Care for the identified top 10 disparities:

The role of the professional nurse incorporates both the function of ensuring that patients' needs are met across settings and providers and facilitating the delivery of quality care. Professional nurses have the potential for significant contributions to patient-centered, and cost-effective care through care coordination for Palomar. Patients access the services of Palomar Health over their life span as they move through the wellness and illness/injury health care continuum. Palomar Health have health care providers that are able to coordinate the complete preventive and episodic needs of patients as they require throughout the continuum of their care. The primary goals for patient care, at Palomar Health continuum of care are as follows:

Match the individual patient's and family's needs with the appropriate level of preventive care, medical intervention and/or psycho-social services.

Coordinate care through integration of all systems such as wellness care, acute hospitalization, skilled nursing as well as home health and hospice care referrals as appropriate.

Provide seamless transfers within the Palomar Health:

Palomar Health, nursing model for patient centered care is relationship-based care and nursing effectively communicates with patients when providing care, treatment, and services following this model. The nursing staff at Palomar Health have chosen the Relationship-Based Care model as its model of care because it best reflects the manner in which care is delivered to patients and their family members across the continuum. Relationship-Based Care is comprised of three crucial relationships:

The care provider's relationship with patients and families

The care provider's relationship with self

The care provider's relationship with colleagues

The provider relationship is one in which the care provider consistently maintains the patient and the family as his or her central focus. Compassion and care are conveyed through touch, a kind act, through competent clinical interventions, or through listening and seeking to understand the others experience. Relationship-Based Care refers to a philosophical foundation of the model and its operational framework. Healthcare is provided through relationships. All care practices visibly demonstrate the mission and values of Palomar Health, including those of clinicians and staff members from all disciplines, departments and services.

The patient and family are at the center of the Relationship-Based Care model. The following elements of the model promotes organizational health, clinical safety and quality, patient and family satisfaction, physician and staff satisfaction, and effective recruitment and retention:

Leadership - Leaders know the vision, act with purpose, remove barriers, and consistently hold patients, families, and staff as their priority.

Teamwork - Teamwork requires a group of diverse members from all disciplines and departments to define and embrace a shared purpose and to work together to fulfill that purpose.

Care Delivery - The patient care delivery system is the infrastructure for organizing and providing care to patients and families. The system determines the way in which the activities of care are accomplished and is built upon the concepts and values of professional nursing practice.

Professional Nursing - Professional nursing exists to provide compassionate care to individuals and their loved ones. Nursing is a primary component in a complex, interdependent health care delivery system.

Resources - A resource driven practice is one which maximizes all available resources: staff, time, equipment, systems, and budget.

Outcomes - Achieving quality outcomes requires planning precision and perseverance. It begins with defining specific, attainable and measurable outcomes

The initial phase of relationship-based care is performed through the nursing assessment, which is performed within 24 hours of admission. Nursing identifies the patient's oral and written communication needs, including the patient's preferred language for discussing health care. This communication includes the need for personal devices such as hearing aids or glasses, language interpreters, communication boards, and translated or plain language materials. The nursing staff communicates with the patient during initial nursing assessment and provides the patient treatment, and services in a manner that meets their oral and written communication needs. Palomar Health medical record contains information that reflects the patient's care, treatment, services, race and ethnicity. Palomar Medical Center respects, protects, and promotes patient rights.

Palomar Health nursing standards also require care plans that are to be completed within 8 hours of admission and these care plans are individualized by the interdisciplinary team that contain specific, actionable information for staff across multiple care settings. These care plans

promote communication and continuity of care/patient centered /relationship by suggesting communication strategies, treatment plans, and psychosocial resources.

Palomar Health Regulatory / Equity Committee reviews patient equity data to determine if they experience less safe or lower quality of care or poorer health outcomes associated with their race, ethnicity, language, disability, or sexual orientation. The Regulatory/Equity Committee reviews other factors, to document if these disparities in health care could be caused by cultural or language barriers that impair communication with caregivers, impeded access to care, or fear of discrimination. The goal of the Regulatory/Equity Committee is to address cultural, communication, mobility, SDOH, and other patient needs during their patient admission.

Goal and Time Frame:

Document teach back at discharge; ≥95%; patient/caregiver preferences integrated and documented by greater than or equal to 95% of the time maintain 12 months at 100%.

Increase care plan individualization per disparity group by greater than or equal to 95% of the time within 12 months and maintain 100%.

6. Patient Safety: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Health conducts a patient safety survey every other year and participates in Leap Frog. Palomar Medical Center Poway received a grade A and Palomar Medical Center Escondido received a grade B from Leap Frog for their data and processes for Spring of 2026. Palomar Medical Center Escondido has reviewed the opportunities that were identified and are working on process improvements related to surgical site infections and urinary tract infections. The overall data continued to show improvement in retained foreign items, accidental rents and tears in the procedural areas, respiratory issues, and kidney failures following procedures. For the safety related questions Palomar Health performed within the average hospital range for all the measures. The other measures for Palomar Health performed within the expected average for all hospitals participating in Leap frog. Palomar Health reviews overall readmission data at their Quality Committee quarterly. The C-Section and VBAC data is shared monthly at the OB Committee and biannually to the Quality Committee. The PNM Mortality rates are shared quarterly with the Quality Committee and all metrics are reported biannually to the Board of Directors. This information is shared with the care team and includes readmissions, reason for readmissions, C-Section, VBAC, and PNM Mortality rates. Part of the discussions for how to reduce readmissions includes, medication reconciliation, access to care, were clear instructions provided, was discharge planning started on the first day of the admission, timely follow-up by providers, and access to a post discharge contact/what does the patient need to look for and who do they call. Palomar will continue to improve follow-up after hospital discharge to include connecting patients with community-based services, providers, and other treatment modalities to help prevent readmissions. The discharge paperwork and process were updated to include community resources, phone numbers, individualized education plan, and as needed referrals for outpatient services. The Case Management team developed a report that is sent via email to the leadership team to help provide oversight to ensure appropriate discharge planning is occurring. Palomar Health will continue to monitor and report on C-Section rates, VBAC rates, and PNM mortalities and the strategies that are implemented to help to improve the rate ratios as aforementioned.

Goal and Time Frame:

Palomar Health will ensure that the 10 top priorities, which include readmissions, C-Section rate, VBAC, and PNM mortality meet all the monitoring requirements addressed in the aforementioned goals and time frame
Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

7. Addressing Patient Social Drivers of Health: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

The patient's (SDOH) such, as but not limited to access to transportation, difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills, education and literacy, food insecurity, and housing insecurity will be assessed on all patients. The process that is used to monitor and report progress is the Prapare form which was added to the initial nursing assessment. This process also is included in the Outpatient Departments to ensure that patients with limited resources have the support that they need. Once a positive result is documented by nursing there is an automatic referral process sent to the Case Management team. The Case Management ("CRM") team are able to interview the patient and determine what resources are needed for the patient's continuity of care. The Case Management team and nursing team worked with information technology and developed an electronic drop down of community resources and after care instructions that are tailored to meet the needs of the patient at discharge. The Case Management leadership team conduct monthly reviews to ensure consistent and individualized discharge planning is based on the patient's needs and diagnosis.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

Goal and Time Frame for completing Prapare Form:

Nursing staff will complete the Prapare Form 100% of the time to ensure that SDOH needs are identified for all patients admitted to Palomar Health

Nursing staff will submit referrals 100% of the time when a SDOH has been identified on a patient recently admitted

Nursing staff will ensure that the SDOH referrals were addressed before discharge 100% of the time

8. Effective Treatment: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Health has reviewed their process with care transitions from one setting to another setting within the facilities. The nursing team determined that there are potential gaps when transferring patients care from one level of care to another, which include within the facilities or to a SNF. The nursing staff has worked with the information technology team to improve their documentation for the following:

Identify patients at risk for ineffective transitions of care

Document within the EMR the transition assessment and hand off

Perform medication reconciliation for transitions of patient care and communicate to next care provider

Individualize a nursing care plan that addresses all care across the continuum

Communicate essential care to next level and to other team members to include CRM to help facilitate effective discharge planning to help to prevent readmissions

The readmission data has helped improve the care transitions from acute care to the ambulatory setting and enabled the CRM team to set up pre-discharge interventions with a patient, ensure patient/family education is in place and done, post discharge interventions done/to include outreach community programs, and ensuring medications are reconciled at discharge.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

PNM Mortalities:

Palomar used our SDOH data, and we determined that the PNM mortalities were not linked to socioeconomic factors, like income, insurance or homelessness.

Palomar Health reviewed their plan of care for patients admitted with pneumonia and ensured that they contained short- and long-term goals.

Time frame and Objectives for reducing PNM Mortality Rate:

Reduce PNM Mortality rate in disparity groups by greater than or equal to the disparity group by 5% in 12 months, and narrow the rate ratio gap by greater than or equal to 1% over 24 months.

Palomar Health System Vag Birth after C-Section:

This is a physician driven decision made with the physician and the patient and is dependent upon many variables including the uterine incision type, how many C-Sections, emergency capabilities of the facility, and the patient's prior history. Based on ACOG VBAC guidelines a physician and an anesthesiologist must be immediately available during a trial of labor. The physician determines if the patient is appropriate for a trial of labor after a C-Section and the physician must ensure that there are immediate emergency capabilities, and the patient meets criteria for the trial.

Based on these guidelines the rate of VBACS increasing will be difficult to achieve since this is a physician driven decision:

Time frame and Objectives for increasing V-Bac rate

Goal:

Improve rate ratio from a 2.3 to a 2.1 over the next 12 months

C-Section rate:

Palomar Health will continue to identify *Nulliparous, Term, Singleton, Vertex*, describing first-time pregnancies at ≥ 37 weeks with a single fetus in head-down position (NTSV) at the beginning of every shift during huddles, discuss strategies and barriers, RN staff are trained in spinning babies and discuss during huddle which RN is able to assist with positioning. The nursing unit has bundle birth information on huddle boards that RN staff review and look for ways to help with NTSV during labor, and they continue to report their NTSV rates and goals monthly at the OB Committee meeting.

Time frame and Objectives for decreasing C-Section rate:

Goal:

Improve rate ratio from a 2.3 to a 2.1 over the next 12 months and the disparity rate by 1% over the next 12 months

9. Care Coordination: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Health will include the following processes for care coordination for the top 10 priorities.

Palomar Health's EMR has a robust discharge planning and patient education process that is addressed in their "adult inpatient standards", and OB Nursing standards of care.

Teach-back method: Nurses ensure the patient and caregivers understand their care plan, medications, and warning signs by having them repeat the information in their own words.

Clear instructions: Discharge instructions are provided in simple, understandable language, and provided in both written and digital formats.

Shared decision-making: Involve patients in their care from the time of admission to help them prepare for a smooth transition home.

Medication reconciliation: A medical staff-led review of all medications before discharge is performed to prevent missed, duplicate, or incorrect dosages, which can cause adverse events.

Adherence support: The CRM (Case Management team) initiate communication with the patient to ensure patients can access and adhere to their medication schedules, which can be done through pharmacist phone calls, automated reminders, and financial assistance.

Post-discharge support and communication

Timely follow-up: The CRM and or nursing staff will schedule follow-up appointments with primary care providers (PCPs) or specialists within one week of discharge. This is performed at the time of discharge

Post-discharge contact: Depending on patient needs, there is a follow-up phone call from a nurse within 24–72 hours of discharge can assess the patient's condition and reinforce discharge instructions.

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

C-Section and VBAC:

Both of these disparities involve effective communication and team coordination with physician, nursing, and the patient. Communication is based on cultural beliefs, language preferences, and patient comfort levels. All communications are patient centered and patients are involved in shared decision making which helps improve trust and outcomes. This is how "relationship based" care is supported at Palomar Health

PNM Mortalities:

With "relationship based" care transitions from transferring patients from one level of care to another require increased communication on medications, treatment requirements, infections, plan of care, and other vulnerable points of care for the patient that must be communicated to the next care provider. Poor coordination increases the risk to the patient; therefore, hand-off occurs from one unit to another and from RN to RN.

10. Access to Care: Describe your hospital's/system's performance in this priority area. (5000 characters max)

Palomar Health provides access to care so that patients can receive the right medical services when they need them without facing obstacles. The goal for care is ensuring everyone, regardless of their background, can get the services they need to help catch early illnesses and manage chronic conditions. Palomar Health will continue to close the gap by helping to reduce disparities in different populations of patients. CRM at Palomar Health provides follow-up for timely care, provides clear discharge instructions, and coordinated post-acute support from community resources. The CRM team continue to offer the patient:

- Follow-up appointment made by CRM
- Medication reconciliation and home medications
- Social inequities which would make it difficult to continue with recovery, i.e., housing, rides, caregivers. CRM connects the patient to community resources
- Education to include what to do and whom to call for worsening symptoms

Goal and Time Frame:

Initial Case Management referral / interview within 48 hours for all patients readmitted. Goal is 95% of all readmissions within 6 months and reduce the rate ratio by 1% for all reference groups in 12 months.

System Description (only applies to system reports)

11. System Description: Describe your hospital system. Information reported may include but not limited to, providing an overview of your organizational structure, services, capacity, overall role within the healthcare landscape, ownership, geographic location, the full range of clinical and support services offered, and any distinguishing features that define the system's mission and impact. (5000 characters max)

Despite efforts to improve healthcare access and quality, hospitals continue to face challenges in achieving health equity. Disparities based on socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, and other social determinants persist, leading to differential healthcare outcomes among patient populations. Factors such as structural racism, implicit bias, inadequate cultural competency, and limited resources contribute to these disparities, posing significant challenges to equitable healthcare delivery. Palomar Health plays a crucial role in providing healthcare services to diverse populations. Achieving health equity will require identifying and addressing the systemic barriers that contribute to these disparities. Therefore, Palomar will document any patient's (SDOH) which may include, but not limited to, access to transportation, difficulty paying for prescriptions or medical bills, education and literacy, food insecurity, and housing insecurity will be assessed on inpatients. Palomar will include, but not be limited to, high-risk population of patients with diabetes, pregnant women, or homeless. If SDOH are identified, the patient will be provided information about community resources and support activities. Patients that have been screened for these social needs may have obstacles to high quality care which could contribute to poor health. Screening for these social determinants of health will be performed by nursing staff for inpatient admissions which will include the Obstetrical Unit. Palomar will use available data from the Prapare Screening Tool to help identify health care disparities in its patient population and prioritize which population(s) on which to focus. Palomar will conduct a

stratification analysis using social demographic characteristics such as age, gender, preferred language, or race and ethnicity to better understand the specific disparities that may exist for the patient population.

Social Determinants PRAPARE section is addressed on the OB Admission History and Adult Inpatient History form

The RN fills out all the required fields within the form.

If a patient screens for any listed social determinants of health, a Case Resource Management consult order will automatically be placed:

In the past year, have you or any family members you live with been unable to get any of the following when it was really needed?"

Food Insecurity

Housing Instability

Transportation Needs

Utility Difficulties

Interpersonal safety

Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work, or from getting things needed for daily living?"

Yes, kept from getting to medical appointments/getting medications

Yes, kept from non-medical meetings, work, or necessities

If the stratified analyses show differences across groups, Palomar will work to understand the root cause of the differences

Equitable Access to Healthcare Services: Ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to healthcare services.

Cultural Competence and Linguistic Access: Promoting cultural competence and linguistic access within healthcare settings to ensure that healthcare providers can effectively communicate.

Community Engagement and Partnership: Engaging communities and partnering with community organizations, stakeholders, and policymakers to develop and implement strategies for promoting health equity.

Data Collection and Monitoring: Improving data collection and monitoring systems to track health disparities

Palomar will evaluate and revise their action plan as necessary. Leaders, providers, and staff will be informed at least annually on the progress to reduce identified health disparities.

Social Determinants PRAPARE section was added to the following outpatient areas for any patient over the age of 18:

Emergency Department, Infusion Therapy, Radiation Oncology, Wound Care and Hyperbaric therapy, Cardiac Rehab, Perinatal Services, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech/OP, Interventional Radiology, Cardiac Cath lab, and, OP OB Triage

Department of Health Care Access and Information: Palomar Health collects hospital screening data for all patients that are 18 years or older for all five-health related social needs.

The number of patients admitted to the hospital who are 18 years or older at time of admission and who screened for all SDOH identified

The total number of patients who are admitted to the hospital who are 18 years or older on the date they are admitted

The percent of patients screened for all SDOH identified

Palomar Health does review data quarterly

Age Friendly Measures:

Eliciting Patient Healthcare Goals

This domain focuses on obtaining patients' health-related goals and treatment preferences which will inform shared decision-making goal concordant care

Responsible Medication Management
This domain aims to optimize medication management through monitoring of the pharmacological record for drugs that may be considered inappropriate in older adults due to increased harm

Frailty Screening and Interventions (i.e. Mobility, Mentation, and Malnutrition)
This domain aims to screen patients for geriatric issues related to frailty including cognitive impairment/delirium, physical function/mobility, and malnutrition for the purpose of early detection and intervention where appropriate

Social Vulnerability (social isolation, economic insecurity, ageism, limited access to healthcare, caregiver stress, elder abuse)
This domain seeks to ensure that hospitals recognize the importance of social vulnerability screening of older adults and have systems in place to ensure that social issues are identified and addressed as part of the care plan

Age-Friendly Leadership:
This domain seeks to ensure consistent quality of care for older adults through the identification of an age friendly champion and/or inter-professional committee tasked with ensuring compliance with all components of this measure

Palomar integrated the age friendly measures into existing documentation and will evaluate these strategies within the Regulatory/Health Care Equity Committee.

Palomar Health has set goals to create health processes that ensure every older adult receives the best care possible and:
is not harmed by care is satisfied with the care they receive

Palomar Health screens patients ≥ 65 years of age for Medication, Mentation, Nutrition, and Mobility & Provide resource when patients meet screening criteria

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospital Commitment to Health Equity (HCHE) Structural Measure

The CMS Hospital Commitment to Health Equity (HCHE) Structural Measure consists of five Domains, each of which have from 1-5 attestations. Read all attestations for each domain. If **all** attestations within a domain are true for your hospital, select ‘**Yes**’ for the Domain (Yes/No). If **any** attestation within a domain is not true for your hospital, select “**No**” for the Domain (Yes/No).

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types, the CMS HCHE Structural Measure is not required for hospital systems.

12. CMS HCHE Domain 1: Strategic Planning

Attestations

- i. Our hospital strategic plan identifies priority populations who currently experience health disparities.
- ii. Our hospital strategic plan identifies healthcare equity goals and discrete action steps to achieve these goals.
- iii. Our hospital strategic plan outlines specific resources that have been dedicated to achieving our equity goals.
- iv. Our hospital strategic plan describes our approach for engaging key stakeholders, such as community-based organizations.

Domain 1: Strategic Planning (Yes/No)☒ Yes ☐ No**13. CMS HCHE Domain 2: Data Collection***Attestations*

- i. Our hospital collects demographic information, including self-reported race and ethnicity, and/or social determinant of health information on the majority of our patients.
- ii. Our hospital has training for staff in culturally sensitive collection of demographics and/or social determinant of health information.
- iii. Our hospital inputs demographic and/or social determinant of health information collected from patients into structured, interoperable data elements using a certified electronic health record (EHR) technology.

Domain 2: Data Collection (Yes/No)☒ Yes ☐ No**14. CMS HCHE Domain 3: Data Analysis***Attestation*

- i. Our hospital stratifies key performance indicators by demographic and/or social determinants of health variables to identify equity gaps and includes this information in hospital performance dashboards.

Domain 3: Data Analysis (Yes/No)☒ Yes ☐ No

15. CMS HCHE Domain 4: Quality Improvement	
<i>Attestation</i>	
i. Our hospital participates in local, regional, or national quality improvement activities focused on reducing health disparities.	
Domain 4: Quality Improvement (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No
16. CMS HCHE Domain 5: Leadership Engagement	
<i>Attestations</i>	
i. Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews our strategic plan for achieving health equity.	
ii. Our hospital senior leadership, including chief executives and the entire hospital board of trustees, annually reviews key performance indicators stratified by demographic and/or social factors.	
Domain 5: Leadership Engagement (Yes/No)	☒ Yes ☐ No

CMS Screening for Social Drivers of Health (SDOH) and CMS Screen Positive Rate for SDOH and Intervention

The CMS Screening for Social Drivers of Health measure assesses whether a hospital implements screening for all patients that are 18 years or older at time of admission for all of the five-health-related social needs (HRSNs) including Food insecurity, Housing instability, Transportation problems, Utility difficulties, and Interpersonal safety. HQI will calculate the *rates* based on the numerators and denominators you provide. **If a value is unavailable or unknown, type '0' in the field.**

Note: HCAI marked these fields as required for all hospital types and hospital systems.

CMS SDOH Overall Screened	
17. Overall Screened Numerator: Number of patients admitted to an inpatient hospital stay who were 18 years or older on the date of admission and were <u>screened for all five HRSNs</u> . (9 digits max)	16,780
18. Overall Screened Denominator: Number of patients who were admitted to a hospital inpatient stay and who were 18 years or older on the date of admission. (9 digits max)	17,736

CMS SDOH Food Insecurity	
19. Food Insecurity <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for food insecurity. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	286
20. Food Insecurity <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for food insecurity. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	286

CMS SDOH Housing Instability	
21. Housing Instability <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for housing instability. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	1,023
22. Housing Instability <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for housing instability. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	1,023

CMS SDOH Transportation Problems	
23. Transportation Problems <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for transportation problems. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	456
24. Transportation Problems <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for transportation problems. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	456

CMS SDOH Utility Difficulties	
25. Utility Difficulties <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for utility difficulties. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	192
26. Utility Difficulties <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for utility difficulties. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	192

CMS SDOH Interpersonal Safety	
27. Interpersonal Safety <u>Positives</u>: Number of patients positive for interpersonal safety. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	254
28. Interpersonal Safety <u>Interventions</u>: Number of interventions provided for interpersonal safety. <i>(9 digits max)</i>	254