

# AMERICA'S PHYSICIAN GROUPS

Taking Responsibility for America's Health

## STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE™ 2024 FAQ

### What is Standards of Excellence™?

In 2006, America's Physician Groups' Board of Directors created **Standards of Excellence™ (SOE®)** as an annual survey that effectively assesses physician organizations' readiness to take on greater clinical accountability and financial risk. It is designed using member-identified and member-tested tools and processes. Participation over sequential years yields tiered guidance about the types of clinical practice and administrative improvements critical to success in alternative payment models. The survey questions and response options act as a blueprint for how to build care and administrative infrastructure and operations that enable accountable organizations to effectively meet escalating patient needs and payor demands in a risk-bearing environment.

The following rigorous categories represent the 2024 APG national Standards of Excellence™ with performance in Domains 1-5 scored. Performance awards will be publicly reported in the Fall each year.

**Demographics Information**—Participating organization type, size, attributable patient populations, and status of involvement in governmental programs or alternative payment models

**Domain 1—Population Health Management:** Clinical system supports that enhance quality and efficiency on a population scale

**Domain 2—Health Information Technology:** Systems and technology that enable timely and actionable information for patient engagement, service access, and coordinate care

**Domain 3—Accountability and Transparency:** Processes that support practice and physician performance and reporting, regulatory compliance, and resource use optimization

**Domain 4—Patient-Centered Care:** Capabilities that promote effective patient communications and delivery of accessible, high-quality care

**Domain 5—Advanced Primary Care:** Essential investments in practice innovations and for building sustainable, team-based primary care

**Domain 6—Administrative and Financial Capability:** Key organizational infrastructure needed to achieve success in risk-bearing relationships (Informational only with *no* public reporting)

## **Why SOE®?**

APG’s SOE® survey has become an industry standard for evaluating the level of sophistication of accountable physician practices and organizations, and there is no other comparable “implementation playbook” analogous to the SOE® for value-based care. It is also one of the only tools that enables physician groups to benchmark their accountable care capabilities against peers (see example white paper on [Social Determinants of Health](#) based on the 2018 SOE®). Our aim is for the survey to serve as an organizational strengths and opportunities navigation tool that supports advancement in accountable care capabilities.

## **Who participates?**

Participation is selectively offered only to APG members and is voluntary. 2024 will be APG’s 17<sup>th</sup> year of the SOE® survey. In 2023, 137 of APG’s more than 360 medical groups, IPAs, health system-affiliated physicians groups, ACOs, and MSO members participated in the assessment. Of these 137 participating organizations who are collectively accountable for the care of over 28 million patients under commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid coverage, 72 achieved the coveted Elite status. Notably, 6 out of 8 of our newest APG members achieved Elite status with their first-time survey participation in 2023.

## **Who decides on the content?**

Every year, APGs’ Clinical Quality Leadership Forum reviews the survey questions in each domain and sets performance standards. This workgroup of clinicians takes into account rising national care quality and efficiency standards, policy shifts, and important considerations in striving toward the Quadruple Aims.

## **How long does it take to complete?**

The APG SOE® survey typically takes approximately 10 hours to complete with C-suite involvement and a cross-disciplinary team of staff from various organizational departments, including clinical, operational, and financial.

## **How are results reported?**

Domains 1 – 5 are scored and Elite performance status is publicly reported each year with the consent of participating physician organizations. A subset of APG’s member organizations serve as representatives in our Clinical Quality Leadership Forum, which determines the benchmark star thresholds for each domain. Threshold setting occurs in late Summer/early Fall each year once our survey administration partner returns survey results to APG.

A participating physician organization is rewarded a star in each domain where its performance scores above the annually adjusted benchmark threshold for that domain. Groups that achieve a star in each of Domains 1 – 5 will be recognized as an Elite organization at APG’s Annual Fall

Conference and through our multi-channel press release. The complete Star Chart of all participating groups is available for members-only viewing at <http://www.apg.org/soe>.

Here is the overall performance designation in our Star reward system:

- 5 stars = Elite
- 4 stars = Exemplary
- 3 stars = Meritorious
- 2 stars = Admirable
- 1 star = Commendable
- 0 stars = Participant

We collaborate currently with PRC as our survey administrator. PRC hosts a streamlined, easy-to-use web-interface for survey participants, as well as reviews, scores, and ensures accurate and consistent reporting on submitted surveys.

### **When does the survey take place?**

This year, the SOE® survey is anticipated to launch on **April 10, 2024**, with web platform user training by PRC on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Email notifications of the upcoming training and launch will be sent to all APG members in the weeks prior to the training and launch. We strongly encourage all APG members to participate. Please contact APG SOE Administrative Coordinator, Norma Springsteen, [nspringsteen@apg.org](mailto:nspringsteen@apg.org) to ensure your organization is on the 2024 active survey roster or to register your organization for participation.

For more information regarding survey content or survey results, please visit [www.apg.org/soe](http://www.apg.org/soe) or contact APG's Chief Medical Officer, **Dr. Susan M. Huang** at [cmo@apg.org](mailto:cmo@apg.org).