

OASIS Alert

News You Can Use: Avoid This Mistake Nearly 7,000 Agencies Are Making

Don't let one staffer hold all the keys to your online OASIS system submissions.

Only registering one user to submit your OASIS data and view reports online is a big mistake, yet more than 6,900 home health agencies are currently making it.

Better: You should register one primary user and one backup user so that you aren't reliant on a single person for submitting and viewing information, said CMS' **Pat Sevast** in a Home Health, Hospice, and Durable Medical Equipment Open Door Forum on Aug. 25.

This way, if your primary user leaves, your agency doesn't find itself unable to submit patients' OASIS assessments or view CASPER reports, she said.

Note: Each agency can only have two registered users -- but that's per site. So if you have three branches, you are allowed six registered users. And if you feel two users aren't enough, you can petition the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for an additional user.

For more information or to acquire an additional registration, go to www.qtso.com or call (888) 477-7876. CMS Extends Exemption Deadline for HH CAHPS Think it's too late to apply for an exemption from participating in the Home Health Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HH CAHPS) survey? Think again.

CMS has extended the deadline for eligible agencies, which includes those that are Medicare-certified and served fewer than 60 unduplicated survey-eligible patients in the 12 months ending March 31, 2010.

However, there is not yet a new deadline for applying for the exemption. "The updated deadline will be put into the final rule for the Home Health Prospective Payment System," said CMS representative **Lori Anderson** in the Aug. 25 Open Door Forum.

Updated OBQI Manual Hits The Streets

Your wait for the Outcome-Based Quality Monitoring (OBQM) Manual is over. CMS published the revised manual on its website on Aug. 4. The updated manual defines and describes agency patient-related characteristics (formerly referred to as case mix) and potentially avoidable events (previously called adverse event outcomes). It also offers instructions on how to use reports for quality monitoring and several hypothetical samples to help agencies best use their own data.

Next up: CMS plans to release the revised Outcome- Based Quality Improvement (OBQI) in the next few weeks. It recently posted a revised version of the Process- Based Quality Improvement (PBQI) manual.

Resource: Download the new OBQM manual at www.cms.gov/HomeHealthQualityInits/Downloads/HHQIOBQMManual.pdf.

Early Hospice Care Could Extend Patients' Lives

Receiving early palliative care improves quality of life and increases longevity, according to a new study in the most recent issue of the New England Journal of Medicine. In a study of lung cancer patients, participants who received early palliative care instead of just standard oncology treatment had "significant improvements in both quality of life and mood," says the study headed up by Massachusetts General Hospital researchers in Boston. And "patients receiving early palliative care had less aggressive care at the end of life but longer survival" -- about two months longer.

Patients receiving palliative care were in hospice programs longer, says the study, which is available for free at www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1000678.