

OASIS Alert

OASIS News: Home Health Compare Improvements Slow To A Crawl

"Consumer-friendly" text announced.

The Medicare home health industry is finding it harder than ever to demonstrate quality advances.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** posted updated Home Health Compare data on Mar. 14.

Of the 10 OASIS-based quality measures posted, only one showed improvement in the national average since the last update in December 2005. The national average for "patients who get better at moving or walking around" (based on M0700) improved from 38 percent to 39 percent, according to data reflecting agency performance from December 2004 through November 2005. This outcome has improved 5 percent since the outcomes were first publicly reported--its national average in November 2003 was 34 percent.

Two other measures have also improved a total of 5 percent since 2003, although they did not improve this quarter. These are "patients who get better at bathing" and "patients who get better at taking medications correctly by mouth."

Consumers should find changes in Home Health Compare text to make the site more "consumer-friendly," CMS announced.

To see the new data, go to www.cms.hhs.gov/HomeHealthQualityInits and click on "Home Health Compare."

- **Failing to submit a request for anticipated payment** before filing a final claim (Reason Code 38107) was one of the top 10 claims submission errors in the first quarter of fiscal year 2006, regional home health intermediary **Associated Hospital Service** reports.

For specific instructions on how to correct this error go to www.ahsmedicare.com/provider/toolbox/faq.asp. Scroll down to "Provider Top 10" and choose the "First Quarter 2006" link.

- **Agencies that thought no one was noticing** state quality comparisons will be startled to see the lead business story in the Mar. 21 issue of Wisconsin's leading newspaper, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

The headline reports that Wisconsin's home health care is "ranked among the worst." It cites the state's overall averages as below the national averages in 11 of the 12 OASIS-based quality measure used in the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** charts.

The charts are found at www.qualitytools.ahrq.gov/qualityreport/2005/state/summary/map.aspx. The AHRQ data goes only through 2004, but the article refers readers to the CMS Home Health Compare Web site for information about specific agencies.