

OASIS Alert

OASIS News Jumpstart Acute Hospitalization Reduction Efforts With New Resources

Don't let your competitors get ahead of you.

If you're not addressing acute care hospitalization yet or haven't achieved the level of success you want jump on the new Quality Campaign bandwagon for all the help you need.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** kicked off its Home Health National Quality Campaign last month. The goal is to reduce unplanned hospitalizations and improve quality of care.

What you get: The campaign will provide participating agencies with free tools, resources, guidelines, success stories, best practice education materials and data. More than 4,100 home health agencies signed up for this campaign as of Feb. 9, the **Home Health Quality Improvement Organization** says on its Web site.

Also available to agencies are monthly best practices packages on the top 12 interventions for preventing avoidable acute care hospitalizations, explains **Misty Kevech**, Training and Education Manager with **Quality Insights**, the Pennsylvania QIO.

Beginning in March, each month's package will address a new practice. Any home health agency may download the packet, even one not registered as a participant, she says.

The packages will contain a section for managers and administrators and a section for skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, medical social workers and home health aides.

The material will use two tracks to address the intervention one for agencies already using the best practice under discussion and one for agencies that have not yet tried the intervention. The first three interventions hospitalization risk assessment, patient emergency plan and medication management are available at the beginning of March, April and May respectively.

Note: Download the packages from the Web site www.homehealthquality.org/hh/hha/interventionpackages/default.aspx.

- **The National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel released** its 2007 descriptions of pressure ulcers at www.npuap.org/documents/NPUAP_2007_PU_Def_and_descriptions.pdf.
- **Providers can predict risk** for hip fracture and related mortality among elderly women using four rules, according to a Swedish study reported in the January/February issue of the Annals of Family Medicine. The four predictors are age greater than 80 years, weight less than 60 kg, previous fragility fractures and difficulty rising five times without arm support. Cortisone medication use also was a significant factor, the study noted.
- **If you want to see Medicare transmittals that apply** only to your provider type, check out a new list of home health-specific transmittals at www.cms.hhs.gov/HomeHealthPPS/HHPPSTrans/TopOfPage. "The list begins with program transmittals released in December 2006," CMS notes in a Jan. 23 posting to its Web site. "As program transmittals are released, they will be added to this Home Health Transmittals list."
- **Regional home health intermediary Palmetto GBA has released** on its Web site "Plan of Care 101," an educational article targeting HHAs. Key questions answered include what the POC must include and who's allowed to

sign the document. The article also elaborates on what constitutes a "valid physician signature."

Warning: Don't let a nurse practitioner or physician assistant sign the plan of care in lieu of a physician, Palmetto reminds providers.

- **Agencies looking for more room for M0240 diagnosis codes** on home health claim forms will love the new UB-04 form. The UB-04 which you may start using on March 1 and must use by May 23 includes an expanded diagnosis code field (67) that accepts 18 ICD-9 codes. That gives you room to report up to eight additional diagnosis codes, although Medicare currently plans to ignore these eight new spaces, according to CMS Transmittal 1104.