

OASIS Alert

OASIS News: MedPAC Pushes For New Quality Measures

If MedPAC has its way, you'll be adding process measures to your quality improvement efforts.

The **Medicare Payment Advisory Commission's** June 2006 report to Congress focuses its home health recommendations on adding quality measures -- especially process measures. Process measures will include all home care patients, MedPAC says. "Unlike measures of functional improvement, process measures could address the quality of ongoing efforts ... to prevent the deterioration of health for patients who are not improving," the advisory body says.

Heads up: In its report, the Commission outlines the three falls prevention best practices and three wound care practices its expert panel offered earlier this year. And it "encourage(s) CMS to use measurement development experts to translate fall prevention and wound care best practices into process measures and to validate those measures."

Note: For the MedPAC report, go to www.medpac.gov/publications, select "Click here to access more publication links," select "Reports" and then select the June 2006 report.

- **In its latest semiannual report to Congress, the HHS Office of Inspector General focuses** attention on M0175. The OIG stressed that in its review of 400 sample claims, all 400 were incorrect. All the patients had been discharged from both an acute care hospital and a rehab facility in the 14 days prior to beginning the home care episode, the OIG noted. But all the claims omitted the acute hospital stay. This resulted in overpayments to the agencies (see OASIS Alert, Vol. 7, No. 5, p. 43).

Medicare overpaid home health agencies about \$48.1 million during FYs 2002 and 2003, the OIG estimates.

The semiannual report is at <http://oig.hhs.gov/publications/semiannual.html#1>.

- **The June update to Home Health Compare** shows improvement in only one measure: "Patients who have less pain moving around." This measure improved by one percentage point. Now four of the original Home Health Compare measures have improved five points each, one has improved three points and two remain unchanged over the three year period since the public reporting began.

The June data covers the period from March 1, 2005 to Feb. 28, 2006. The next up-date is scheduled for September.

- **The Food & Drug Administration and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices want you to join** them in helping to stamp out potentially confusing abbreviations that are frequently misinterpreted and kill thousands of people each year, the **American Society for Quality** reports.

Agencies focusing on improving medication management or reducing acute care hospitalizations may find useful resources from this nationwide campaign at www.ismp.org/tools/abbreviations.