

OASIS Alert

OBQI : HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT HOME HEALTH COMPARE LATELY?

Rest on your laurels and you'll lose ground.

Home Health Compare -- now nearing the end of its first year -- is a moving target for home health agencies.

The May 27 update continues the pattern the March 4 update began. Once again, the national average improved in eight measures and remained the same in three (see chart). This upward creep means unless agencies also improve in most categories, they may soon appear worse than the national average.

Missouri agencies have improved on average between 1 and 3 percent on outcomes since the first preview of data, reports **Mary Schantz**, executive director of the **Missouri Alliance for Home Care**.

New York agencies, on the other hand, met or exceeded the national average on nine of the 11 outcomes in the initial data, eight of the 11 in March and only seven of the 11 in June, notes **Carol Rodat**, president of the **Home Care Association of New York**. HCANY questions the validity of the comparisons.

New York outcomes "are in the mean or median" when compared with other states "with similar practice patterns," Rodat calculates. But "we believe our scores are brought down by the thousands of chronically ill patients -- eligible for nursing homes -- who are cared for under the state's home and community-based waiver program," she speculates.

Compare the latest updates in the chart below. The next update will occur Sept. 2, according to the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**.

