

OASIS Alert

OBQI: TRIM YOUR OBQI BUDGET BY TAKING A TIERED APPROACH

If you're trying to pound all the nuances of OBQI into your staffers' heads, you're probably wasting time and energy not to mention money.

While outcome-based quality improvement shouldn't be a complete mystery to anyone in your home health agency, not everyone needs to be an OBQI expert. "Different agency staff members have unique training needs," notes the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** in the OBQI Implementation Manual.

The one or two staff members responsible for training others should "acquire as much knowledge as possible about OBQI and outcome enhancement," the manual instructs. Other types of staff members within the agency don't require the same level of knowledge as trainers, CMS counsels.

For example, management needs to become aware of time and resource requirements, and also should "have a solid base of understanding of the OBQI reports and the steps in the evaluation and corrective action process," according to Chapel Hill, NC-based consultant **Judy Adams** with the **Larson Allen Health Group**. Clinicians must be involved in the process-of-care investigation and plan monitoring and all staff should understand the basic OBQI concept, the Implementation Manual advises.

Only the group evaluating the OBQI reports to identify outcomes worthy of focus needs to grasp the ins and outs of those reports, Adams continues. "Everyone in the agency does not need to be involved in the statistical analysis," she offers.

Trim Training Helps Secure Staff Buy-In

Agencies should note that leaving certain staffers out of a particular OBQI loop shouldn't be interpreted as a malicious attempt to withhold information, "It's just a practical efficiency issue," says consultant **Pam Warmack** with **Clinic Connections** in Ruston, LA. "It's simply not fiscally responsible to try to include an agency's entire staff" in the full OBQI process, she opines.

Aside from the financial pitfalls of excessive training, agencies that take a need-to-know approach to OBQI education likely will have a more pleasant OBQI experience overall.

"Keeping things simple will make the OBQI process much smoother and decrease associated anxiety," Adams tells **Eli**.

Another tip for securing staff buy-in is to highlight the good things OBQI can accomplish for your agency and patients, Adams suggests.

The information obtained through OBQI can illuminate superior outcomes, can serve as a marketing tool, provides a way for agencies to recognize excellence among staffers and can provide a method to improve patient outcomes, she concludes.

Editor's Note: For more information about who within your agency should receive what level of training, see the chart, article 10.