

OASIS Alert

Training: HHQI NATIONAL CAMPAIGN RELEASES FIRST TRAINING PACKAGE

Look for the timesaving physician notification form.

There's no excuse now for not tackling your acute care hospitalization outcome.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** is continuing its full court press to decrease re-hospitalization rates for home health patients. In March, the **Home Health Quality Improvement National Campaign** released its first best practices intervention package on hospitalization risk assessment. On April 2, it will release the next package on Patient Emergency Planning.

As of the beginning of March, more than 4,500 home health agencies (about 50 percent of all certified Medicare/Medicaid HHAs) registered to participate in the one-year project, reports the **National Association for Home Care & Hospice**.

Helpful: The intervention package is designed to be flexible and to provide tools and information for providers just beginning to address the hospitalization issue, as well as for agencies already working on it, lead quality improvement organization **Quality Insights of Pennsylvania** explains.

The risk assessment package has tracks for leadership and for care providers, including separate tracks for nurses, therapists, social workers and home health aides. It includes a risk assessment tool to identify high-risk patients and a physician notification form you can fax to a high-risk patient's doctor.

How To Use The First Intervention Package

The amount of material in the package could be overwhelming for a home health agency. "The package is comprehensive and laid out in a precise and helpful format," says **Patricia Jump** with Stewartville, MN-based **Acorn's End Training & Consulting**. Besides the five tracks for the different parts of the agency, there is a "Fast Track" for HHAs "with limited time and resources."

Added extras: The package also includes audio recordings, tools and resources and a WebEx recording that explains the layout and design of the package, and how to use it. The packages are available to all HHAs, regardless of whether they have registered for the campaign, NAHC reports.

Jump offers these three steps to make the most of the training material:

1. Start with introductory training. This is for all staff and is as brief and simple as possible. Here you explain what the quality improvement campaign is all about, Jump recommends. "Be sure to stress that this campaign's purpose is to provide the best possible care to clients to keep them out of the hospital and in their homes--where they want to be," she tells **Eli**

Expert tip: A colorful flyer as a payroll insert or mailing would work here. Emphasize how exciting it is that the whole nation will be working together on this. And provide a Web link for those eager for "the rest of the story," Jump suggests.

2. Start using the online material. Meet with the leadership to go over the entire package, but also immediately begin training all the rest of the staff at one time, Jump says. Make the training mandatory, using the return of the completed post-test to fulfill that mandate, she suggests.

Try this: For staff uncomfortable with online training, provide the printed material as an independent study article.

Smart idea: For clinicians doing admissions, start with the Fast Track material and introduce the provided forms, Jump advises. "This is an excellent way to gather the right information and get physicians used to home care clinicians asking standard questions," she says.

3. Make training fun. Turn the training into a contest with rewards for those who complete it in a set time frame, Jump says. Emphasize that this is all about the client, she adds.

Strategy: "Caregivers want to do what is best for the client and emphasizing this helps mitigate the concern that this is 'one more thing we have to learn,'" Jump adds.

Bottom line: "Don't get overwhelmed. Be selective with your action plan. Even small changes can make an impact," the campaign reminds providers.

Note: For more information, to register for the campaign or to download the package, go to the campaign's Web site at www.homehealthquality.org.