

## Hello!

Welcome to Quality Source E-News, a monthly online supplement to the quarterly Quality Source magazine published by QSource. For more information about QSource or to view our printed publication online, visit [www.qsource.org](http://www.qsource.org). (Note: This publication is best viewed online in HTML format. To view it in this format, please change the settings in your e-mail.)

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## IN NURSING HOME NEWS...



**Now that you're a STAR, how about becoming a NHIFT nursing home?**

**New FREE online resource available in January**

Now that nursing homes across the state and nation have set targets using the STAR Web site, they will have a new FREE online resource available in January to assist them with reaching their goals.

The Nursing Home Improvement and Feedback Tool (NHIFT, pronounced "nifty") is a free, computer-based, process-of-care data collection tool that assists nursing homes in collecting data and viewing process measure scores for four clinical topics: depression, pain, physical restraints, and pressure ulcers.

Developed by clinical experts, the NHIFT process measures are based on best practices. The measures focus on admission because high quality nursing home care begins on a resident's first day.

Using NHIFT, you can track adherence to the recommended care processes, compare your performance to your peers, and guide care by identifying recommended processes.

To prepare for NHIFT, nursing homes will need to visit MedQIC to download the paper NHIFT tool and begin to think about current care processes to see if you are performing the care processes described in NHIFT.

[Click to find out more about NHIFT...](#)

## IN HOME HEALTH NEWS...

### Home Health Target Setting

Home health agencies (HHAs) are next to become STAR participants as CMS launches the Setting Targets- Achieving Results (STAR) initiative for HHAs. STAR is a national initiative that utilizes measurable data to set targets and monitor progress over time while working with QSource in the effort.

HHAs are encouraged to begin selecting targets for the initiative. QSource is requesting that agencies focus



QSource is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, physician-sponsored, healthcare quality improvement organization (QIO).

As the federally contracted QIO serving Tennessee, the organization is dedicated to improving the quality of healthcare provided to Tennesseans through education and advocacy.

### Physician Membership Criteria

If you are a physician holding a current and unrestricted license to practice medicine or osteopathy in Tennessee, and are actively engaged in the practice of medicine or osteopathy in Tennessee, you are eligible to become a physician member of QSource.

### Membership Benefits

- Assistance in Preparing for Pay-for-Performance
- No Membership Fees or Dues
- Free bi-monthly magazine and monthly e-news
- Eligible to serve on the QSource Board of Directors
- Eligible to nominate and vote for members of the QSource Board of Directors
- Eligible to become a Physician Reviewer/Advisor and/or Consultant

### How to Join

It's simple. Click on the link below to

on the Improvement of Oral Meds and Acute Care Hospitalization. So far, 55 agencies in Tennessee have set targets for the initiative.

Agencies that did not attend the recent QSource Home Health Workshops may not be familiar with Target Setting, said Marian Boxer, QSource home health program manager. Those who have questions can contact her via [email](#) or at 800.528.2655 ext. 2638.

**Three Agencies Recognized for ACH**

Three home health agencies were recently presented certificates of recognition for their efforts in improving their Acute Care Hospital (ACH) outcomes.

Marian Boxer, QSource home health program manager, presented CareAll Home Care Services of Knoxville, NHC Home Care Springfield and Premier Support Services/Interim Healthcare of East Tennessee with certificates during November's Tennessee Association for Home Care meeting in Gatlinburg.



[View The Agencies' photos...](#)

**FYI! February Workshops Update!**

Just as a reminder, February Workshop dates will be forthcoming as we are in the final stages of making plans. Please visit the QSource Web site's "[Events](#)" page for updates and registration. The sessions to be held in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville and open to all statewide participants.

**It's Flu & Pneumonia Season!**

Remember to vaccinate your patients against flu and pneumonia!! This is a very simple way to improve patient care and reduce potential hospital admissions. Free resource are available online at the [Centers for Disease Control's Web site](#).

[Immunization Resources...](#)

**IN HOSPITAL NEWS...**

**SCIP Update**

New forms containing information relevant to each quality measure (such as the definition, rationale, included and excluded populations, and data elements) are now posted online for quick and easy download. References used to support the measure are also listed. In addition, the algorithm used to determine the numerator and denominator for each measure is included.



[Newly posted SCIP specifications!](#)

**Hospital Quality Alliance and Reporting Hospital Quality Data for Annual Payment Update Upcoming Preview Information**

The preview period for the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA) and Reporting Hospital Quality Data for Annual Payment Update (RHQDAPU) data is scheduled for Jan. 4 through Feb. 3, 2006.

On or after Jan. 4, preview reports can be accessed through the HQA Preview Reports link located in the Reports section of the secure home page of QNet Exchange. For detailed instructions on how to retrieve your HQA preview report, please refer to the QNet Exchange User's Guide.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) refreshes the Facility Characteristics Data on the Hospital Compare Web site using OSCAR/ASPEN system data. To modify facility characteristics, the provider must contact their state OSCAR/ASPEN coordinator in writing. Click here for [contact information](#).

Providers that converted from an Acute Care Hospital to a Critical Access Hospital (CAH) may consolidate their data under the new CAH provider number. Contact [QSource](#) for assistance.

The HQA preview report file will contain:

- Facility characteristics
- Performance rates for third quarter 2004 through second quarter 2005 discharges
- Aggregate performance rate for all four quarters
- Rate achieved by the top 10 percent of hospitals nationwide (i.e., 90th percentile)
- State and national averages

On March 16, 2006, Hospital Compare will present quality of care rates from up to four quarters of data. Rates will be based on third quarter 2004 through second quarter 2005 discharge data accepted into the QIO Clinical Warehouse. All RHQDAPU pledged providers receiving full annual payment update (APU), in accordance with Section 501 (b) of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003, will be included in the public release of the ten "Starter Set" quality measures.

complete the online application. [Click here to join!](#)

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Only HQA-pledged providers will have preview data for all 20 quality measures. They may suppress only the additional ten HQA measures.

HQA pledged only providers may withhold publication of data for any of the 20 quality measures.

To withhold publication of data, the provider must contact their QIO Hospital Public Reporting contact with their request to withhold and transmit a completed "Request for Withholding Data from Public Reporting" to that contact **no later than close of business Feb. 3.**

If a hospital suppresses data for any quarter, the entire measure becomes suppressed for all quarters.

Providers that do not have an active RHQDAPU or HQA pledge will receive a report header with the statement: **"You do not have an active pledge status for Annual Payment Update (APU) nor Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA) for the preview report period (Jan 4 through Feb. 3, 2006)".**

If this message is received in error, the provider must contact their QSource Hospital Reporting contact prior to the preview period closing date Feb. 3. Click [here](#) for the the QIO Hospital Public Reporting contact list.

## IN PHYSICIAN OFFICE NEWS...

### Sign-Up for DOQ-IT

The Doctor's Office Quality Information Technology (DOQ-IT) project has been a tremendous success and QSource is currently providing free electronic health record (EHR) assistance to more than 100 practices across Tennessee.



Under the contract with CMS, QSource is to work with 5 percent of the adult primary care physicians in Tennessee -- approximately 150 practices. QSource is currently accepting applications for support.

[Click here to register for free EHR assistance and consulting from QSource](#)

### EHR Resources & Tools Available Online

In the process of looking for an EHR? Don't know where to begin? QSource offers a variety of online resources and FAQs for physician offices wanting to understand an EHR.

[You can find it here!](#)

### Cultural Competency Module Training

CMS is recommending that physician offices across the nation become more culturally competent in the care they provide to patients with diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures.

To do this, physicians are encouraged to complete an online Cultural Competency course and receive up to nine CMEs in the process.

[If interested click here...](#)

### Message Board Available to Physicians

Many healthcare providers have asked for a way of sharing information, asking questions and having discussions with other Tennessee healthcare providers on various medical topics. Users of the QSource Web site now have the opportunity to do just that with new message board capabilities.

Physicians interested in implementing an EHR are the first to have access to the message board. You will need to register to use the board and you may post messages and comments as frequently as you like.

If interested in joining the Physician Office/DOQ- IT message board, click [here](#).

[Click Here for the Message Board...](#)

## In DOQ-IT Related News...

### EMR Certification Pilot Launched

The Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology published proposed final criteria for certifying ambulatory EMRs at the beginning of this month. Criteria cover functionality, interoperability, and security and reliability. The Commission also is launching a pilot test of its proposed criteria and inspection methods. About six to nine vendors of EMRs for ambulatory care will participate with two or three vendors accepted in each of three product categories. The categories include: enterprisewide EMR systems for hospitals, systems marketed to medium-size outpatient medical groups of 10 physicians or more and systems targeted to practices with fewer than 10 doctors.

[Read the full story...](#)

### Consumers emerge as key to health records: survey

Consumer awareness remains the biggest obstacle to the public's use of personal health records, according to a recently released survey, and a prominent health information technology executive said "healthcare provider engagement" is needed to remove this barrier.

[Read on...](#)

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