

## Hello!

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## IN THIS ISSUE OF...

- NURSING HOME NEWS
- HOME HEALTH NEWS
- HOSPITAL NEWS
- PHYSICIAN OFFICE NEWS
- DOQ-IT RELATED NEWS
- MEDICARE NEWS

## NURSING HOME NEWS



### "Five Star System" to be Added to Nursing Home Compare Site

CMS will soon launch a ground-breaking ranking system of America's nursing homes, giving each a star rating, according to a CMS press release. CMS is requesting comments on the system designed to provide patients and their families an easy to understand assessment of nursing home quality, making meaningful distinctions between high performing and low performing homes.

The ratings will be posted on the Nursing Home Compare Web site by the end of the year.

[Link to the press release >>](#)

**Certified Eden Associate Training July 23-25**



## Spring/Summer 2008 Issue of *Quality Source* Available Online

In this issue of *Quality Source*, we discuss how all QSource task areas passed the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) evaluation criteria for our 8th Scope of Work contract.

We also share the results of the 2007 Provider Satisfaction Survey in which nearly 400 nursing home, home health, hospital and physician office staff members in Tennessee rated their satisfaction with QSource's services over the past three years.

[View the latest issue >>](#)

The Eden Alternative is offering a three-day training to become a certified Eden Alternative Associate. The training is July 23-25 at Bordeaux Long Term Care in Nashville. The cost is \$525 per person.

[Learn more >>](#)

### Advancing Excellence Campaign Monthly Newsletter

The *Campaign Advance* is the official source for up-to-date information on the progress and accomplishments of the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes campaign. The newsletter features upcoming events and shares nursing home success stories from across the country.

[Link to the latest issue >>](#)

### Quality Basics for Providers Webinar July 8

The Quality Basics presentation series is tailored for healthcare staff who are new to the quality improvement field or for those who are seeking to expand their knowledge. The next session, titled "Applying Lean Methodology to Improve Clinical Workflow Processes," will be July 8 from noon to 1:30 p.m. ET. The presenters will show how to organize and facilitate Lean workflow and will offer an opportunity for participants to review sample materials.

[Register now >>](#)

## HOME HEALTH NEWS

### Message from the QSource Home Health Program Manager: Update on ACH and Oral Meds Rates



March 2008 data shows that the statewide acute care hospitalization (ACH) rate is continuing to increase. The ACH rate increased from 32.68 percent in February to 32.79 percent in March. Tennessee's ranking in ACH has dropped from 46th to 48th in the nation.

Similarly, Tennessee's rate for improvement in the management of oral medications decreased from 45.03 in February to 44.89 percent in March.

### ACH Target Achievers

QSource is proud to recognize agencies that have achieved their target rate for ACH set by CMS.

[View featured agencies >>](#)

### Correction to HHQI Benchmarking Reports

The June Home Health Quality Improvement Benchmarking

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reports have an error in the date on the second page of the report. The year should read "2008" instead of "2007". The data is otherwise correct.

### **Free Care Transitions Education**

Medscape, which offers free medical information and educational tools to providers, now has a care transitions activity to educate health professionals on enabling patient participation in self-care after returning home from the hospital.

The activity consists of a review of care transitions content with video and a post-test. Free continuing medical education (CME)/continuing education (CE) credits are available. Physicians can earn a maximum of 0.5 credits and nurses can earn up to 0.5 nursing contact hours (none are in the area of pharmacology). All other healthcare professionals completing CEs for this activity will be issued a certificate of participation. Registration is required.

[Link to the activity >>](#)

### **OBQI Checklist**

Outcome-Based Quality Improvement (OBQI) is a systematic approach to achieve better patient outcomes and higher quality care through continuous quality improvement techniques. A new checklist will help agencies identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

[View the checklist >>](#)

### **Home Health Compare Refresh Schedule**

Home Health Compare is refreshed quarterly. The refresh dates for the remainder of 2008 are:

July 18 (January 2007 - December 2007 reporting period)  
September 18 (April 2007 - March 2008 reporting period)  
December 18 (July 2007 - June 2008 reporting period)

[Link to Home Health Compare >>](#)

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## HOSPITAL NEWS



### **Value-Based Purchasing Demonstration Shows Continual Improvements**

Latest results of the Premier Hospital Quality Incentive Demonstration (HQID) show dramatic across-the-board improvement in the performance of participating hospitals, according to a CMS press release. Launched in October 2003 by CMS and the Premier Inc. Healthcare Alliance, HQID involves about 250 hospitals in 36 states.

Fifteen hospitals moved from "worst to first" rankings, moving from the bottom to the top fifth of hospitals in one or more clinical areas. These hospitals improved by an average 32.6 percentage points in quality scores over three years.

[Link to the press release >>](#)

### **MedQIC Updates**

A comprehensive list of resources on topics ranging from immunizations to heart care to quality improvement is now available on MedQIC.

Also, the June issue of the MedQIC Monthly Newsletter is packed with success stories from providers across the country who have improved their quality of care. The quarterly update of the Annotated Rural Bibliography and the Rural Resources list have also been posted to MedQIC.

[View the list of new resources >>](#)

[Link to the Monthly Newsletter >>](#)

[Link to the Annotated Bibliography >>](#)

[Link to the Rural Health resource list >>](#)

### **AHRQ Patient Safety Network**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Network features links to the latest tools, literature and news in patient safety, as well as an annotated collection of patient safety resources.

[Link to the AHRQ Patient Safety Network >>](#)

### **"In the Spotlight" Update from IHI**

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) works to accelerate improvement by building the will for change, cultivating promising concepts for improving patient care, and helping health care systems put those ideas into action. The IHI's "Spotlight"

features current quality improvement initiatives and developments facilitated by IHI.

[See what's featured in the "Spotlight" >>](#)

### Healthcare Training and Certifications

The American Society for Quality (ASQ) offers healthcare-specific training and certifications. Learn how quality can reduce medical errors and waste and increase patient safety.

[Learn more >>](#)

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## PHYSICIAN OFFICE NEWS

### CMS Proposes Payment, Policy Changes in 2009

CMS recently proposed new efforts to promote access to higher quality and more efficient healthcare delivered by the nation's physicians to people with Medicare under the 2009 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS), according to a CMS press release.



The MPFS was created by Congress and is updated annually to set the Medicare payment rates for more than 980,000 physicians and non-physician practitioners who bill Medicare for the services they furnish to beneficiaries. Under a formula in the Medicare statute, CMS is required to reduce the 2009 PFS by 5.4 percent. Total Medicare spending under the 2009 PFS is projected at \$5.4 billion, down 5 percent from \$57 billion projected for 2008.

[Link to the press release >>](#)

### AMA Issues First Report Card on Health Insurers

The American Medical Association (AMA) has issued its first health insurance report card, with the primary focus on how quickly and accurately doctors get paid, *HealthLeaders Media* reports. The report card is an effort to reduce the cost of claims processing to doctors and help them as they negotiate contracts with insurance companies.

[Link to the Report Card >>](#)

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### **FREE Resources from QSource**

The "Diabetes Road Map" is available in English and Spanish. The Road Map is a pocket-size booklet in which patients can keep track of daily blood sugar readings and other readings performed during doctor visits.

Also, the "EHR Under Construction" brochure and poster are available for practices implementing an electronic health record (EHR) system.

To place an order for either, [click here](#) or call 800.528.2655 ext. 2664.

QSource offers a variety of [online resources](#) and FAQs for physician offices wanting to understand an EHR.

## **DOQ-IT RELATED NEWS**

### **HHS Releases Plan to Encourage HIT Adoption**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources (HHS) recently released a comprehensive plan to advance the national health information technology (HIT) to achieve President Bush's target for the majority of Americans to have access to EHRs by 2014.

[Link to the HIT Adoption plan >>](#)

### **Medicare Reform Bill Includes HIT Provisions**

Senate Finance Committee Chair Max Baucus (D-Mont.) has introduced a Medicare reform bill (S 3101) that includes several HIT provisions, *iHealthBeat* reports.

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 would create incentives for physicians who use electronic prescriptions from 2009 to 2013. Starting in 2011, the legislation would mandate the use of e-prescriptions for Medicare beneficiaries. Physicians who do not comply would face Medicare payment penalties of up to 2 percent.

[Link to the article >>](#)

## MEDICARE NEWS

### QSource Assistance with HPMP Will Cease Aug. 1.



Effective Aug. 1, Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) will no longer be responsible for implementing the Hospital Payment Monitoring Program (HPMP). These responsibilities are being transferred to other entities.

The purpose of HPMP is to measure, monitor, and reduce the incidence of improper fee-for-service inpatient acute care Medicare payments. Hospitals may wish to contact the Health Care Compliance Association for compliance-related questions and the Fiscal Intermediary or Medicare Administrative Contractor for billing questions.

QIOs will be able to distribute Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Reports (PEPPERS) through the January 2009 data release. The tools and resources posted at [HPMP Resources](#) will be available through this date as well.

Also, the inpatient records for calculating the national fee-for-service Medicare error rate are now sampled under the Comprehensive Error Rate Testing (CERT) program as of April 2008. More information on the CERT program is available [online](#).

This material was prepared by QSource, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Tennessee, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.

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