

[<Back](#)[Print](#)

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**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.)

**IN THIS ISSUE OF...**

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

**NURSING HOME NEWS****It's Not Too Late to Register for the "Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes" Campaign!**

There are approximately 5,775 nursing homes participating in "Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes," a new coalition-based campaign focused on improving the quality of care and quality of life for those living in America's nursing homes. Click [here](#) to learn more about the campaign and register.

**Set Your 2008 STAR Targets**

Don't forget to set your 2008 Setting Targets-Achieving Results (STAR) targets.

Click [here](#) to set your 2008 targets or to create a new account. Don't wait!!

For further assistance, contact QSource QI Specialist [Beth Hercher](#) 800.528.2655 ext. 2640.

**Reminder: Tools and Resources Available on QSource Web Site**

The QSource Nursing Home team has a host of free, archived calls

**Summer 2007 Issue of Quality Source Now Available**

In this issue of *Quality Source*, we introduce you to Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs) working to connect healthcare providers across the state and nation by the government's 2014 deadline.

We also discuss nurse retention in hospitals, consistent assistant in nursing homes, and lack of communication between home health agencies and physicians.

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on topics ranging from consistent assignment to falls management and restraint reduction. Click [here](#) to visit the Tools and Resources page.

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## HOME HEALTH NEWS

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



QSource is very proud to announce that Tennessee home care agencies showed an improvement in the Acute Care Hospitalization (ACH) outcome statewide moving from 32.72 percent in April to 32.61 percent in May.

The statewide score in Improvement in Management of Oral Medications continues to show progress. The CMS target rate for Tennessee was 42.11 percent. May data shows continued improvement at 44.54 percent.

Congratulations to agencies that have worked so very hard to improve their scores and improve the lives of patients in Tennessee.

### Home Health Immunization Survey

QSource is tasked with assisting home health agencies to incorporate influenza and pneumococcal immunization into the comprehensive patient assessment as part of QSource's current contract requirements. QSource would like to thank the 105 agencies that have responded to our request. QSource will be contacting agencies that have not completed the survey by Sept. 15.

Any agency that has not completed the remeasurement survey should do so by clicking [here](#). Most agencies completed the same survey one year ago. It is very important that every agency complete the survey. The completed survey should be faxed to Marian Boxer, QSource home health program manager, at 901.761.3786.

For more information, contact [Boxer](#) at 800.528.2655 ext. 2638. Agencies can also contact QSource Quality Improvement Specialists [Barbara Meadows](#) at 615.574.7202 or [Betty DeBlasio](#) at 615.574.7200.

### 2008 STAR Targets

QSource is asking all agencies to set goals for 2008 on the [Setting Targets-Achieving Results \(STAR\)](#) site. In addition to acute care hospitalization and improvement in management of oral meds, agencies are encouraged to set targets for any or all of the other publicly reported measures. Putting agency targets into STAR is not a contractual commitment; there are no penalties for not

For More Information...



[Find out more about DOQ-IT](#)

**Nursing Home STAR Site**  
Setting Targets - Achieving Results

[Be A STAR!](#)



Tell Us What You Think!

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**Home Health STAR Site**  
Setting Targets - Achieving Results

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reaching targets. This site also provides access to valuable information on OASIS.

A username and password is required to access STAR accounts. To acquire an agency password, contact the QSource Home Health team: [Betty DeBlasio](#) 615.574.7200 and [Barbara Meadows](#) 615.574.7202. Agencies can also contact [Marian Boxer](#) at 800.528.2655 ext. 2638.

### **ACH Target Achievers**

QSource is proud to recognize agencies that have achieved their target rate for acute care hospitalization set by CMS. Click [here](#) to view the featured agencies.

### **Home Health PPS Final Rule Released**

CMS recently issued a final rule to refine and update the Home Health Prospective Payment System (HH PPS) for Calendar Year (CY) 2008. This final rule reflects the ongoing efforts of CMS to support beneficiary access to home health services and improve the quality and efficiency of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries through more accurate payments for services rendered. Refinements to the Medicare HH PPS as well as the annual update to the Medicare payment rates for home health services will disburse an estimated additional \$20 million in payments to home health agencies in CY 2008. Read [more](#).

### **ACH Campaign Intervention Package Available Sept. 4**

The seventh Best Practice Intervention Package [-Immunization-](#) will be available Sept. 4.

This is one of 12 intervention packages that will be provided electronically to home health agencies registered for the National Home Health Quality Improvement Campaign. More than 5,357 HHAs have signed up to participate.

The intervention package includes educational tools and resources, information sharing, best practice education and individual agency reports with data not available through Outcome Based Quality Improvement (OBQI) reports. These resources assist agencies with reducing avoidable hospitalizations. Click [here](#) to learn more about the campaign and register.

Click [here](#) for the September ACH Calendar of Events.

### **Care Transitions Intervention**

A trial led by Dr. Eric Coleman, MD, associate professor at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center's School of Medicine, found that patients who require treatment in multiple sites of care may now be able to reduce their hospital bills and rates of re-hospitalization through the Care Transitions Intervention. The study was published in the Sept. 25 issue of the

*Archives of Internal Medicine*. You can find more information on this intervention and article [here](#).

### **Take A Loved One for a Checkup Day Sept. 18**

Take a Loved One for a Checkup Day encourages individuals to see a healthcare professional on or around Sept. 18, or make an appointment for the near future. Its goal is to generate a greater understanding of the importance of regular health screenings while at the same time focus on those populations that tend to have the least access to health care. Click [here](#) to learn more.

### **World Heart Day Sept. 30**

Heart disease and stroke is the world's largest killer, claiming 17.5 million lives each year. That's why World Heart Day was created, to create public awareness of risk factors for heart disease and stroke, and to promote preventive measures.

The theme of this year's World Heart Day is "Team Up for Healthy Hearts!" Organized by World Heart Federation members and partners, World Heart Day activities include free screenings, walks, runs, jump rope sessions, fitness events and much more. Click [here](#) to learn more.

### **Friday Calls Help Decrease Weekend Hospital Visits**

"Friday calls" is a new best practice strategy developed by Wright Memorial Home Health and Hospice in Trenton, Mo. This home health agency (HHA) used Friday calls in conjunction with hospital risk assessments, front-loading visits and emergency plans of care to improve in 10 out of 11 quality measure. Learn [more](#).

## **HOSPITAL NEWS**



### **Message from QSource Hospital Program Manager: Annual Payment Update (APU) Status**

All eligible Tennessee hospitals have submitted the Notice of Participation Form in a timely manner. And, all eligible

Tennessee hospitals have passed the validation component. Well done!

The next major component of the APU is for CMS to make the determination as to whether or not all eligible hospitals have met their "complete and timely data submission" requirements. After that CMS will post the FY2008 APU pass/fail list at [QualityNet](#) in the public section. Last year, this list was not posted until Sept. 29. We anticipate a similar situation this year.

Be sure you understand what is required for compliance with the FY2008 APU. Follow the link from the [QualityNet](#) homepage to the CMS website to download the IPPS FY2008 Final Rule (pages 818-912). The APU components of the Final Rule are conveniently

summarized within a document called the "[Reference Checklist](#)," in the Hospital section under RHQDAPU.

Also, the [QualityNet](#) homepage has a link to the CMS website for the Proposed Rule for Outpatient PPS. Become familiar with the many new proposed changes related to quality measure reporting in the outpatient setting. You will also find information on how to make comments to CMS about their Proposed Rule.

### **New Rural Health Resources Available on MedQIC**

Three new/updated resources for rural health are now available on MedQIC.

[Rural Annotated Bibliography July 2007](#)

[Rural Health Quality Resources](#)

[Improving Patient Safety in Rural Hospitals: Translating Research into Practice \(Presentation\)](#)

### **August MedQIC Update**

A comprehensive list of topics ranging from heart care to rural health to quality improvement is now available on MedQIC. Click [here](#) to view recently posted resources.

### **Report: Hospitals Must Prepare for Future Health IT Systems**

A new report from first Consulting Group provides an overview of next-generation clinical information systems on the horizon and details steps that hospitals should begin taking to prepare for these new systems, *iHealthBeat* reports. Read [more](#) (registration required).

### **Federal Medical Error Reporting System To Go Live in 2008**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) national voluntary system for reporting medical errors should be established and running by the middle of 2008, according to William Munier, acting director of AHRQ's Center for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety, *iHealthBeat* reports.

AHRQ recently solicited companies to remove identification information from the patient and physician data. The agency also contracted with a separate organization to study the information that doctors and others report. Read [more](#) (registration required).

## **PHYSICIAN OFFICE NEWS**

### **Important Notice Regarding PQRI**

It has come to the attention of CMS that some clearinghouses are stripping the National Provider Identifier (NPI) prior to submission of the claim to Medicare. This



will adversely affect Eligible Professionals in that these claims will not count toward Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) participation.

CMS urges Eligible Professionals that use clearinghouses to check with their clearinghouse to assure NPIs are not being stripped from claims. If the Eligible Professional determines that their clearinghouse is stripping NPIs from the claim, the Eligible Professional may want to consider other billing options.

A recent [Special Edition MLN Matters article](#) contains important information for Medicare providers and suppliers, including how to use the NPI correctly on Part A and Part B claims. For up-to-date information on NPI, click [here](#).

### **OMH Releases Online "Health Care Language Services Implementation Guide"**

The Office of Minority Health (OMH) recently released the "Health Care Language Services Implementation Guide," an interactive Web-based learning tool designed to help healthcare professionals plan, implement and evaluate language access services within their organizations. The guide is available at no cost to healthcare providers by clicking [here](#).

### **FREE Health IT and Care Management Resource Available**

The Doctor's Office Quality-Information Technology (DOQ-IT) University is an interactive, Web-based learning environment available to physician practices. DOQ-IT University offers learning tools to facilitate the adoption and application of health information technology and care management strategies. Click here to visit [DOQ-IT University](#) (registration required). Click [here](#) for registration instructions.

### **"Welcome to Medicare" Exam Available**

The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) expanded Medicare's menu of preventive benefits by covering an initial preventive physical examination. This benefit, also referred to as the "Welcome to Medicare" visit, is an excellent way for new Medicare beneficiaries to get up-to-date on important screenings and vaccinations, as well as to talk with their healthcare provider about their medical history and how to stay healthy. Read [more](#).

### **FREE Resources from QSource**

The Spanish version of the Diabetes Road Map is now available. The Road Map is a pocket-size booklet in which patients can keep track of daily blood sugar readings and readings performed during doctor's visits. The Diabetes Road Map is also available in English.

The "EHR Under Construction" brochure is available for practices implementing an electronic health record (EHR).

To place an order for the Diabetes Road Map or "EHR Under Construction" brochure, click [here](#) or call 800.528.2655 ext. 2664.

## **EHR Resources & Tools Available Online**

In the process of looking for an electronic health record (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](#)!

## **DOQ-IT RELATED NEWS**

### **Report: Tennessee Leads in Health IT Adoption**

Tennessee has one of 12 state Medicaid agencies in the country at the forefront of adopting health IT, according to a report recently released by HHS Office of Inspector General, *iHealthBeat* reports. The report found that the 12 state Medicaid agencies have adopted a total of 16 health IT initiatives, including claims-based electronic health records, e-prescribing, remote disease monitoring and personal health records. Read [more](#) (registration required).

### **National Health IT Office's Report Suggests EHR Changes**

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT recently released a report detailing ways clinicians can make electronic health records more efficient and boost billing accuracy, *iHealthBeat* reports. Read [more](#) (registration required).

### **Survey: EHRs Can Aid Defense in Medical Malpractice Cases**

Forty-five percent of respondents to a survey by the Medical Records Institute and Professional Risk Associates said they think that electronic health record systems can make physician practices less vulnerable to malpractice cases, *iHealthBeat* reports. Read [more](#) (registration required).

### **HHS Secretary Leavitt Launches Blog to Boost Healthcare Discussion**

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt recently launched a blog to foster public discussion and exchange ideas on healthcare issues, *iHealthBeat* reports. Read [more](#) (registration required).

### **Certification Group Announces Plans to Study EHR Market**

The Certification Commission for Healthcare IT will conduct a series of surveys as it prepares to develop criteria for IT systems and networks for 2008, *iHealthBeat* reports. Read [more](#) (registration required).

## **MEDICARE NEWS**

### **Hospital Discharge Resources Now Available**



As of July 2, hospitals must deliver a revised version of the "Important Message from Medicare" to inform Medicare beneficiaries who are hospital inpatients about their hospital discharge appeal rights. Notice is required for both Original Medicare beneficiaries and those enrolled in Medicare health plans. Beneficiaries who choose to appeal the discharge decision will also receive a more detailed notice.



QSource is requesting organization contact information by completing the [Hospital Discharge Appeals Contact Information](#) form. Click [here](#) to learn more about the hospital discharge appeals process and available resources.

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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