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November 2005

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.

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IN NURSING HOME NEWS...**Tennessee #1 with STAR**

Tennessee nursing homes are #1 in the nation as more than 200 nursing homes have signed up as STAR performers by setting targets for the CMS quality measures using the national STAR Web site.

Nursing homes across the nation are registering with the Web site, but Tennessee is the leading state in the participation effort.

During the last three months, QSource has engaged in an intensive effort to recruit nursing homes to become involved with STAR. The Web site allows participating nursing homes to track their progress on four quality measures: restraints, pressure ulcers, depression and chronic care pain.

While the statewide recruitment effort has ended, nursing homes that have yet to sign up for STAR can do so until Dec. 31. Registration on the site is free and available to all Medicare and/or Medicaid certified nursing homes.

If you have questions, please contact Beth Hercher via [email](#) or at 800.528.2655 ext. 2640.



The Fall 2005 print issue of Quality Source will be hitting the streets in the next week, but you can get a sneak peak today by reading the publication online.

In this issue, Quality Source focuses on technology and how it plays a role in healthcare delivery and performance. Our feature story focuses on technophobia (the fear of computers) in healthcare and how to overcome that fear.

We also offer up-to-date graphs on quality measure rates for Tennessee and web links to valuable tools and resources for assisting in your quality improvement efforts.

If you are not a current subscriber to the quarterly print version of Quality Source, then click on the link below for a FREE subscription.

[Visit STAR...](#) [Read Quality Source online...](#)

November Regional Workshops

Nursing homes are invited to attend one Regional Workshop closest to them in an effort to recruit Identified Partners.

The meetings will outline quality improvement efforts that partners and QSource will work together on during the next three years.

There is a \$15 per person registration fee that will cover the costs of the meeting, which includes a light breakfast and lunch. As space is limited, we ask that no more than three staff members attend from your facility. Payment for the workshop can be made by check or credit card.

Registration for the Nov. 3 meeting in Knoxville has ended. Registration for the Nov. 9 meeting in Nashville and Nov. 16 meeting in Memphis is still available online, but will be closed shortly.

[Register Online...](#)

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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 Home Health Program Manager Marian Boxer is requesting agencies focus on the Improvement of Oral Meds and Acute Care Hospitalization. So far, 52 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, Boxer said. Those who have questions can contact her via [email](#) or at 800.528.2655 ext. 2638.

ACH Pilot Participants

Tennessee was one of 11 states selected to participate in a unique CMS-funded pilot program to review and test strategies aimed at preventing avoidable hospitalization.

QSource selected eight agencies located within 50 miles of Nashville to be pilot participants. Among those eight were large, hospital-based agencies and small, independent ones.

Participants were honored with a certificate for their efforts. Photos of participants can be found on the QSource Web site.

[View the photos...](#)

ACH Audit Results Still Needed

More than 114 home health agencies have completed Acute Care Hospitalization (ACH) outcome audits and have a plan in place. However, if you haven't gotten to this level yet, you can still submit your ACH audit results to QSource. CMS has mandated that every home health agency across the nation work on reducing avoidable ACHs. ACH audits can be faxed to 901.761.3786.

[Need Assistance? Contact Marian Boxer](#)

MO780 Staff Interview Tool Due

Tally reports for the MO780 staff interviews are due. QSource can assist you in developing your POA for the Improvement in Management of Oral Medications outcome.

For More Information...



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



[Be A STAR!](#)



[MedQIC](#)

Join our mailing list!

Agencies that complete both their POA and staff interviews will receive FREE medication reminder boxes. Fax the Staff Interview Tally Report to 901.761.3786.

CMS Expectations & Immunization Surveys Due

CMS expects all home health agencies to incorporate influenza and pneumococcal immunizations into the HHA comprehensive patient assessment, as well as offer these vaccines or partner with a vaccine source such as a physician, clinic or health department and provide follow-up.

Agencies were sent in August an [Immunization Survey tool](#) to complete and return to QSource. So far, 87 agencies have complied. It is requested that agencies submit the Immunization Survey to QSource by Dec. 1. You may fax the survey to QSource at 901.761.3786.

Telehealth Tools Available

Agencies are beginning to develop programs to implement telehealth. To assist with the programs, a selection of tools are available through MedQIC that can help guide the process. You can find the tools by clicking on the link below.

[Tools for Telehealth](#)

IN HOSPITAL NEWS...

Need Help Interpreting Abstraction Instructions? We Can Help!

The QSource Hospital Team will host a statewide "Abstraction Clinic" conference call on Nov. 30 to assist hospitals with interpreting instructions for abstracting data. The topic for the call is pneumonia.



If you have specific questions about pneumonia abstraction that you would like to hear discussed during the call, please submit them via email to [Stacy Jowers](#) (West TN Hospitals) and [Lesley Hayes](#) (East TN Hospitals). All questions should be submitted by Nov. 16.

The call will last for 90 minutes beginning at 9 a.m. CST/ 10 a.m. EST. The call number is 800.369.1540 and participant code is 73974#. Handout materials will be made available prior to the call.

CEO Application For Identified Participant Groups Deadline Approaching!

Nov. 15 is the due date for hospital CEOs to apply for inclusion in the CMS Performance Improvement "Identified Participant Groups".

Invitation packets with full descriptions of each of the four groups were mailed to all hospital CEOs on Oct. 7. If CEOs have any questions, please contact Judy Weddle by calling 800.528.2655 ext. 2613 or via [email](#).

8th Scope of Work Presentation Scheduled During TAHQ Session at THA Annual Meeting; QSource To Exhibit

Lesley Hays and Stacy Jowers will be greeting attendees at the educational exhibition during THA's annual meeting at the Nashville Convention Center Nov. 9 and 10.

Stop by to hear about the performance improvement support QSource can provide your hospital during the next three years. While you are there, register to win a great prize basket!

During the THA Annual Meeting, Lesley and Stacy will give a presentation to the TAHQ session attendees on all the QSource QI Programs for the 8th Scope of Work.

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, language and culture.

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

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

In DOQ-IT Related News...

Pay-for-Performance Linked to Quality Improvement for Some Tests

Physicians who received pay-for-performance incentives when they met clinical standards for Pap smears improved their quality of care by a higher rate than those who received standard reimbursements, according to a study published on Wednesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the [Washington Times](#) reports.< p>

[Read on...](#)

AN EHR USER-SATISFACTION SURVEY: ADVICE FROM 408 FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Contemplating the purchase of an EHR? Results of an informal survey may help.

[Read on...](#)

Physicians Buy In, I.T. Pays Off

In a decision to convert their five-clinic, rural health care organization to an electronic medical records system, executives at Columbia Basin Health Association find that electronic medical records improve physician efficiency and patient safety.

The five-year-old effort to create a virtually "paperless" clinical care environment was intended to make clinicians and support staff more efficient and productive, enabling physicians to see more patients on a daily basis by eliminating time lost waiting for charts, lab results and other paper-based data.

[Read more...](#)

IN MEDICARE NEWS...



QSource to Provide Electronic Reports Training to Hospitals

QSource now has free training available for acute-care Prospective Payment System (PPS) hospitals in Tennessee on the CMS "PEPPER" (Program for Evaluating Payment Patterns Electronic Report) electronic reporting tool.

PEPPER provides summary statistics of administrative claims data on CMS target areas (areas likely to have payment errors due to billing, DRG/coding and/or admission necessity issues). Hospitals can use PEPPER to review their data for the current quarters and the previous three fiscal years for each of the areas targeted for improvement by CMS, and compare their performance to that of the other acute-care PPS hospitals within their state.

They can also use the tool to compare their own data across years to identify significant changes in billing practices; pinpoint areas in need of auditing; identify potential DRG under- or over-coding problems; and identify target areas where length-of-stay is increasing. PEPPER can help hospitals achieve CMS's goal of achieving transformational change for the reduction of payment errors.

For the complete story, visit QSource's [newsroom](#).

[More information about PEPPER...](#)

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