

# Quality Counts

Arizona Home Health Quality Initiative

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## What’s New

### HHQI National Campaign

#### Teleconference

The Home Health Quality Improvement (HHQI) National Campaign will host a teleconference for participating agencies on Wednesday, June 20, from noon to 1:00 p.m. (Arizona time).

Learn important campaign information and hear highlights from agency leaders. Open registration is June 1–15 at <http://www.homehealthquality.org>.  
(one phone line per agency)

## Improvement in Management of Oral Medications

### What are the current numbers?

As of January 2007, Arizona’s rate of improvement in the management of oral medications was 41 percent and the national rate was 42 percent. Individual Arizona home health agency rates ranged from 13 percent to 80 percent. *What is your agency’s rate of improvement?*

Start thinking about what it will take to reach (and then surpass) both the state and national averages in the improvement in management of oral medications. It may be easier than you think. The examples below show how improvement for only a small number of “eligible cases” can greatly improve your agency’s rate.

### Examples:

In the following examples, “eligible cases” represent those patients coded as a 1 or 2 on MO780 at SOC/ROC.

#### Yearly average:

21 improved cases out of 60 “eligible cases” (35%)  
**+ 4 additional cases improved per year**  
 = 25 improved cases out of 60 “eligible cases” (42%)

131 improved cases out of 374 “eligible cases” (35%)  
**+ 26 additional cases improved per year**  
 = 157 improved cases out of 374 “eligible cases” (42%)

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## Medicare Appeals: Provider Information

To view HSAG’s new Medicare provider Web page that contains information about Fee-for-Service and Medicare Advantage benefits, visit <http://www.hsag.com/providers>. The page contains information on:

- The beneficiary notices initiative (BNI).
- Managed care appeals and grievances.
- Sample notice forms (downloadable).
- The Federal Register BIPA Regulation.

## Monthly average:

8 improved cases out of 22 “eligible cases” at discharge per month (35%)  
+ 1 additional improved case per month  
= 9 improved out of 22 “eligible cases” at discharge per month (42%)

26 improved cases out of 74 “eligible cases” at discharge per month (35%)  
+ **5 additional improved cases per month**  
= 31 improved cases out of 74 “eligible cases” at discharge per month (42%)

If you have questions on how your agency can implement best practices to improve the management of oral medications for your patients, please contact Caralyn Williams or Pam Sensky at HSAG.

## Medication Teaching Strategies

### *Patient knowledge and ability*

This teaching strategy will help to promote a consistent approach to assessing, teaching, and evaluating a patient’s knowledge and ability related to the *Improvement in Management of Oral Medications* outcome measure.

### **Assess**

Does your comprehensive assessment include a learning assessment and barriers? Assess to see if the patient has:

### **AAHC Annual Conference June 14–15**

The Arizona Association for Home Care (AAHC) is hosting its annual conference, titled “Healthcare is not an event . . . It is a Journey,” on June 14–15 in Tucson.

Come together with AAHC—your passport for success, and fellow colleagues—your traveling companions, to celebrate, reflect, share, and learn the latest information and strategies that will assist you in moving forward.

For more information or to register for the event, visit <http://www.azhomecare.org/cde.cfm?event=160798>.

- Sensorimotor barriers.
- Environmental barriers.
- Cognitive barriers.
- Emotional barriers.
- Language barriers.
- Pain/discomfort.
- Cultural/religious practices.
- Poor motivation.

If there are no barriers, is the patient ready to learn?

### **Teach**

Make sure your patient education includes aspects that can improve the self-administration of medications. Does the patient:

- Visually recognize the drug?
- Have purpose?
- Understand dosing and administration?
- Recognize brand and generic drug names?
- Understand the expected duration of the therapy?
- Understand when to take medications relative to meals, sleep, etc.?
- Understand what to do in case a dose is missed?
- Understand what to do if the condition being treated becomes/remains a problem?

### **Evaluate**

Evaluate and document the patient’s or caregiver’s response to the education you provide. Does the patient or caregiver:

- Need review?
- Repeat knowledge with cue(s) OR perform actions under supervision?
- Verbalize knowledge and perform actions spontaneously (without cueing/supervision)?

Source: *Med Teaching Strategies “Best Practices for Improvement in Management of Oral Medications,” OASIS Answers, Inc. 2005; QMAP Best Practice Tools.*

## Telemedicine and Telehealth News

### **Study finds telehealth promising for patient management of chronic diseases**

Home telemonitoring of chronic diseases appears to be a promising approach to patient management, according to a study that appeared in the May/June issue of the *Journal of the American Medicine Informatics Association*. A team of Canadian scholars reviewed more than 65 telemonitoring studies in the United States and Europe.

The studies examined home-based management of chronic pulmonary conditions, cardiac diseases, diabetes, and hypertension. Each study employed various information technologies that were used to

monitor patients at a distance.

The scholars concluded that home telemonitoring:

- Produces accurate and reliable data.
- Empowers patients.
- Influences patients' attitudes and behaviors.
- May improve patients' medical conditions.

Although the magnitude and significance of the effects that telemonitoring has on patients' conditions still remain inconclusive, the study suggests that patients will comply with telemonitoring programs and appear to embrace the technology involved. This seemed to be true regardless of a patient's nationality, socioeconomic status, or age.

The study did find differences in home telemonitoring's effects on clinical effectiveness outcomes, such as decreases in emergency room visits, hospital admissions, and average length of hospital stays. The effects of telemonitoring tended to be more consistent in pulmonary and cardiac studies than in studies on diabetes and hypertension.

For more information on this and other related studies, visit <http://tie.telemed.org/news/default.asp#item1510>.

### **Immunization Surveys Available at AAHC's Annual Conference**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) wants to know if your agency is assessing patients to see if they have or need the influenza and/or pneumonia vaccines as part of your agency's comprehensive assessment at SOC/ROC.

As part of this effort, Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG) will be contacting all Arizona home health agencies to conduct a CMS survey to determine if immunization assessments are being performed.

In addition to mailings and phone calls, HSAG representatives will distribute surveys for agencies to complete during the Arizona Association for Home Care's (AAHC's) Annual Conference on June 14–15 in Tucson. Stop by HSAG's exhibit booth and fill out your survey! HSAG wants CMS to know that all agencies are taking steps to protect our elderly population from contracting the flu or pneumonia.

If you have questions on how to incorporate an immunization assessment into your agency's comprehensive assessment at SOC/ROC, please contact Caralyn Williams or Pam Sensky at HSAG.

### **HHQI National Campaign Update**

As of May 25, over 5,100 agencies have registered for the Home Health Quality Improvement (HHQI) National Campaign. This represents about 60 percent of all Medicare-certified home health agencies in the country. Thanks for all your hard work and dedication to reduce avoidable hospitalizations!

### **First BPIP in "Simply Summer Series" now available**

The next Home Health Quality Improvement (HHQI) National Campaign Best Practice Intervention Package (BPIP)—and the first BPIP of the campaign's Home Telehealth "Simply Summer Series" on telehealth, phone monitoring, and frontloading visits—is now available for download by visiting

<http://www.homehealthquality.org/hh/hha/interventionpackages/pmfl.aspx>.

The Leadership Track of this BPIP will help agencies evaluate their current use of phone monitoring and frontloading visits, identify how phone monitoring and frontloading visits can be implemented and/or used effectively, and develop leadership applications for these best practices. Other tracks in this BPIP include a Nurse Track, Therapy Track, Medical Social Worker Track, and Home Health Aide Track. There is also a Fast Track available for agencies that have limited time and resources that highlights key points.

In addition, a short WebEx presentation on the BPIP is available on the campaign Web site to provide a quick overview of the package.

### National Campaign Teleconference

The HHQI National Campaign Teleconference is scheduled for June 20, from noon to 1:00 p.m. Arizona time. This is a free teleconference for all participating agencies that will provide interesting and important information about the campaign.

Open registration for the teleconference is June 1–15 at <http://www.homehealthquality.org>, so register today! Space is limited to one phone line per agency.

Source: <http://www.homehealthquality.org>.

### Evaluate, Update, and Save Your STAR Targets

Have you been to the Setting Targets-Achieving Results (STAR) Web site lately? If not, now is the time for registered agencies to evaluate, update, and save their targets.

Take the time to evaluate your agency's processes and review your goals as a starting point for updating your targets. If your agency has achieved its current targets, take the challenge to set new, achievable targets and look at different methods of target setting (*don't forget to save your changes*). Share this new information with staff members to ensure that all employees share the same vision.

**Still need help?** HSAG representatives will be on hand during the Arizona Association for Home Care's (AAHC's) Annual Conference on June 14–15 in Tucson to help registered agencies evaluate, update, and save their STAR targets. Stop by HSAG's exhibit booth for assistance. The conference will also provide an opportunity for new agencies to register on STAR and set up an account.

Agencies around the country have successfully used STAR to assess the quality of care they provide to patients on an ongoing basis.

For more information on updating your STAR targets or registering on STAR, please contact Caralyn Williams or Pam Sensky at HSAG. Visit <http://www.hhqi-star.org> today!

### HSAG Home Health Team Contact Information

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Visit HSAG's Home Health Quality Initiative (HHQI) Web site at <http://hhqi.hsag.com>.

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