

# Quality Counts

Arizona Home Health Quality Initiative

## In This Issue

HHQI Recognition Program Announcement . . . . .	2
Home Health Resources . . . . .	2
HSAG Home Health Team Contact Information. . . . .	2

## Don't Forget!

### *CMS Open Door Forum*

Please continue to check the link below for monthly CMS Open Door Forum calls.

[http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/17\\_ODF\\_HHHDME.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/17_ODF_HHHDME.asp#TopOfPage)

## New Provider Newsletter Brings Settings Together

*Publication to cover all settings of care—debuting late summer*

Home health agencies (HHAs) around the country have spent the last three years at the forefront of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services- (CMS-) led effort to reduce acute care hospitalization (ACH) rates. Arizona HHAs accepted this challenge and rose to the task by implementing plans of action; attending trainings; implementing evidence-based, best-practice strategies; and working diligently to obtain positive outcomes. As a result of these efforts, ACH rates have been reduced. HSAG commends and applauds Arizona HHAs for their hard work to improve health care quality.

Moving forward, CMS and its partners will incorporate lessons learned from the past three years into the future change efforts. HHA voices have been heard and have influenced new changes. Agencies persuasively said that effective change is not possible in a vacuum, that siloed providers are weaker than collaborative partners, and that multi-disciplinary approaches are necessary to improve health care quality.

CMS projects in the next scope of work do not specifically focus on HHAs, but there will be specific projects that cross multiple settings of care. To that end, HSAG is announcing that it will no longer produce this *Quality Counts* newsletter and begin producing one newsletter for all provider settings—physician offices, nursing homes, hospitals, and home health agencies—in late summer.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### **Home Health Compare Has Been Updated**

*Home Health Compare* has been updated to include the 12-month period from October 2006–September 2007. The database download file, which is available from <http://www.medicare.gov/Download/DownloadDB.asp>, has also been updated. The next update will presumably occur in early July for the 12-month period ending December 2007.

More information on the *Home Health Compare* updating periods is also available by visiting [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OASIS/09a\\_hhareports.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OASIS/09a_hhareports.asp).

By creating one provider newsletter, all settings of care will have access to cross-setting information and will work together to improve health care quality in Arizona. This is another step toward a collaborative approach to improve patient safety and publicly reported measures for Medicare beneficiaries.

Since this is the last issue, HSAG would like to take this opportunity to thank HHAs for reading *Quality Counts*.

## HHQI Recognition Program Announcement

### *Nightingale Homecare receives leadership certificate!*

HSAG would like to congratulate **Nightingale Homecare** on receiving the Gold Certificate of Leadership for its efforts during HSAG's 2005–2008 Home Health Quality Initiative (HHQI) "Go for the Gold!" Recognition Program. This program acknowledged statewide quality improvement efforts in home health and allowed participants to receive recognition for these efforts.

Please join HSAG in congratulating Nightingale Homecare for its commitment to improving home health quality care in Arizona! For more information about the HHQI "Go for the Gold!" Recognition Program criteria, please visit [http://hhqi.hsag.com/GoForGold\\_Criteria.doc](http://hhqi.hsag.com/GoForGold_Criteria.doc).

### Home Health Resources

Don't forget about all of the great resources out there to help you with your quality improvement efforts. Below are just a few:

- Arizona Department of Health Services—Division of Licensing Services  
<http://www.azdhs.gov/als/medical/index.htm>
- Arizona Association for Home Care  
<http://www.azhomecare.org>
- CMS OASIS Training  
<http://www.oasistraining.org>
- Home Health Quality Improvement National Campaign  
<http://www.homehealthquality.org>
- MedQIC—the Medicare Quality Improvement Community  
<http://www.medqic.org>

## 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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