

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Home Health, Hospice and DME Open Door Forum

Moderator: Jill Darling

December 14, 2021

2:00 pm ET

Coordinator: Good afternoon and thank you all for holding. Your lines have been placed on a listen-only mode until the question and answer portion.

I would like to remind all parties the call is now being recorded. If you have any objections, please disconnect at this time. And I would now like to turn the call over to Jill Darling. Thank you. You may begin.

Jill Darling: Great, thank you, (Elan). Good morning and good afternoon, everyone. I'm Jill Darling in the CMS Office of Communications and welcome to today's Home Health Hospice and DME Open Door Forum.

Before we get into the agenda today, I have one brief announcement This open door forum is open to everyone. But if you are a member of the press, you may listen in but please refrain from asking questions during the Q&A portion of the call.

If you do have any inquiries, please contact CMS at press@cms.hhs.gov. And we will get right into our agenda. Up first we have Charles Padgett, who has some updates on the Home Health Quality Reporting Program.

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Charles Padgett: Thank you, Jill. Good afternoon, everybody, and thanks for attending today. We have several announcements about the Home Health Quality Reporting Program, or HHQRP.

First the most recent APU period in which providers can submit reconsideration has closed. CMS is actively reviewing reconsiderations and will provide updates to providers once a decision about each request has been finalized.

Next we would like to remind everyone that CMS will resume home health quality reporting, public reporting, in January 2022. For the January 2022 refresh, home health outcome and assessment information set, or OASIS, measures, scores are based on three-quarters of OASIS assessment data due to the temporary exemption to the Home Health Quality Reporting Program data submission requirements in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Preview reports in quality of patient care star ratings preview reports for the January 2022 refresh were released in November of 2021. These reports are available in iQIES.

On November 23, 2021, the Office of Management and Budget approved the extension for the continued use of the OASIS-D instrument. The new expiration date is November 30, 2024.

Providers collecting OASIS on paper may use up any current inventory prior to using the instruments with the dated expiration dates. Versions of the

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OASIS-D data set with the updated OMB expiration notice may be found on the CMS Home Health Quality Reporting Program OASIS data set Web page found in the download section the OASIS data sets Web page.

Finally, the next interim QAO performance report will be available in iQIES folders on January 1, 2022. It will include OASIS assessments completed during the period of October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.

And that's all I have for home health quality reporting. I'm now going to hand it off to my colleague Lori Teichman for some home health CAHPS updates.

Lori Teichman: Thank you so much, Charles. I have a few announcements for the Home Health CAHPS Survey.

We have opened up training registrations for both the Intro training and for the Update training that are both going to take place in January. The Intro training is a self-directed, self-paced training and new applicant vendors are required to complete a certification at the end. The Update training is a requirement for all currently-approved Home Health CAHPS Survey vendors. This is going to occur one time on Friday, January 28.

It is a short training. We start at 12 noon to accommodate all the different time zones, and it usually lasts not even two hours. The important thing is that all currently approved survey vendors are required to attend.

We have a lot of attendees already registered and subcontractors as well.

Anybody really can attend - home health agencies may also register if they'd

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like to. It is really about what has been updated to the survey, whether it be the survey implementation process or other things, and lessons learned in the survey process in the last year.

So it's really kind of geared to the survey vendors, but we welcome anybody interested in it to either attend live that day or better yet, to even watch a rebroadcasting of the training that we will have posted on our Web site, which is homehealthcahps.org. And you can also request a link to the training in the future when we take the training down off the Web site by just writing to our technical assistance email address, which is hhcahps@rti.org.

We also are going to post our next quarterly newsletter on the HHCAHPS website in January, on January 3rd, and that will feature some updates about the survey as well.

One of our updates is that CMS received OMB approval -- yay -- for a new mode experiment test, which is a nationwide pilot test. And we're going to test a Web mode. And we're also going to test a revised and shorter Home Health CAHPS Survey. The Web mode will be a Web mode with mail follow-up. And we plan to begin data collection for the pilot test in spring 2021.

The next data submission deadline for our survey vendors is Thursday, January 20, 2022, so that's in a few weeks. And we want to make sure that especially all home health agencies look at your data submission report in the For HHAs portal on the HHCAHPS website to make sure that your data has been successfully submitted to the Home Health CAHPS Survey Web site.

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And you could check with your Home Health CAHPS Survey vendor then to make sure if you cannot see that that it was submitted.

And as always, if you have any questions at all about the Home Health CAHPS Survey, you may email hhcahps@rti.org. Thank you so much. And, Charles, I'll hand it back to you to speak about the Hospice Quality Reporting Program. Thanks a lot.

Charles Padgett: Thank you, Lori. Good afternoon. Once again this is Charles Padgett. And I'm now going to present some updates for the Hospice Quality Reporting Program.

First, I'd like to remind everybody about the Hospice Quality Reporting Program requirements for fiscal year 2024, which are based on calendar year 2022 data submissions.

Beginning calendar year 2022, that is January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, the Hospice Quality Reporting Program requirements must be met for the hospice item set, CAHPS Hospice Survey and Medicare claims to comply with the HQRP.

Each calendar year hospices must submit and ensure acceptance of at least 90% of all required hospice item set records by the 30 day submission deadline and participate monthly with the CAHPS Hospice Survey by utilizing a CMS approved third-party vendor in accordance with HQRP requirements.

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Since administrative data is collected from claims, hospices with claims data are 100% compliant with the Hospice Care Index and the hospice visits in the last days of life claims based measure submission requirements.

Hospices are subject to a payment reduction in their annual payment update, or APU, if they fail to comply with the HQRP requirements. Beginning in fiscal year 2024, which uses calendar year 2022 data submissions, the APU penalty will be increased to 4%.

Next we would like to discuss the CMS extraordinary circumstance exception, or ECE policy. Although hospice providers are required to submit HIS and CAHPS data to CMS to comply with the HQRP requirements, CMS recognizes that there are instances where an extraordinary or extenuating circumstance beyond the hospice's control, such as a natural disaster, may delay or prevent submission of required data.

If a hospice provider experiences an extraordinary circumstance, they can initiate a request for extension or exemption. The request must be initiated within 90 days of the extraordinary circumstance event and it must be sent to CMS via email.

Please review the HQRP Extension and Exemption Requests Web page for more information on the ECE policy, including instructions on how to submit extension or exemption requests.

Next we have some public reporting updates. CMS will resume public reporting for the hospice QRP data with the February 2022 refresh period on

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Care Compare. So the February 2022 refresh CMS finalized plans for resuming public reporting data while excluding quarter one and quarter two of 2020.

CMS will use fewer quarters of data than usual to report HIS measures, specifically using quarter three 2020, quarter four 2020 and quarter one 2021 only. CMS will use the most recent eight quarters of data, excluding quarter one 2020 and quarter two 2020 for CAHPS Hospice Survey measures.

Please look for the second edition of the Hospice Public Reporting tip sheet to be released on the HQRP Web site later this week, which will further explain public reporting beginning in February 2022. The Provider Preview Report was issued in November 2021 in advance of the February 2022 hospice refresh.

Next, we have several updates related to quality measures. The new HQRP QM User's Manual, Version 1.00, is now available on the HQRP current measures Web page.

This manual reflects quality measure changes finalized in the fiscal year 2022 Hospice Wage Index and payment update final rule, including two new claims-based measures, Hospice Care Index, or HCI, and hospice visits in the last days of life, or the HVLDL, as we refer to it.

Updated documents related to the current HQRP quality measures, including the QM Manual, change table and updated current measures PDF are available on the HQRP current measures Web page. As a reminder, CMS hosted a

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webinar detailing the new QM Manual and the new quality measures on October 19. Please review materials from this webinar, including a recording on the HQRP Web site for more information.

We would also like to announce several education and training resources. On October 19, as we just spoke about, CMS hosted a webinar about new Quality Measures Specifications User's Manual, Version 1.00, which includes the new claims-based measures that have been added to the HQRP. Materials from this webinar will be available on the provider and stakeholder engagement Web page soon.

CMS has also posted a Q&A document on the HQRP Web site regarding calculating and reporting claims-based measures within the Hospital Quality Reporting Program.

This Thursday, December 16, at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time, CMS will host a webinar providing information on the Consumer Assessment of Health Providers and Systems, or CAHPS, Hospice Survey and the introduction of star ratings to the Hospice Quality Reporting Program. Please look for materials from this webinar to be posted on the HQRP Web site in the near future. You can register at [www dot cms dot gov/medicarequalityinitiativesafetyassessmentinstruments/hospicequalityreporting/hospiceqrpproviderengagementopportunities](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/Hospice-QRP-Provider-Engagement-Opportunities). (<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/Hospice-QRP-Provider-Engagement-Opportunities>)

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Also as previously mentioned, please look for the second edition of the hospice public reporting tip sheet to be released on the HQRP Web site soon, which we will be providing details about public reporting beginning in February 2022.

Finally we'd like to highlight a few issues from the HQRP help desk. In October 2021 updated provider resource documents were announced on the HQRP announcements and spotlights page. These are now available in the HQRP requirements and best practices Web page.

To access these documents, look in the provider toolkit section as well as in the downloads section at the bottom of the Web page. You may need to refresh your Web page to see these new documents. The provider resource documents include getting started with the HQRP, HQRP requirements fiscal year '23 and future fiscal year reporting years and the HQRP Quick Reference Guide for fiscal year 2023.

And that is all of the updates that I have today for the Hospital Quality Reporting Grant Program. I will hand it back to Jill Darling.

Jill Darling: Okay. Thanks, Charles, and thank you, Lori. (Elan), we will open up for Q&A, please.

Coordinator: Thank you. At this time, if you would like to ask a question, please press star 1. Please unmute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted.

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Once again if you would like to ask a question, please press star 1. And one moment, please, for the first question. Our first question comes from (Deirdre Onquet).

(Deirdre Onquet): Hi. Thank you so much for all of the information today. I have a couple of questions. I have one for Charles and one for Lori.

The first one is for Charles. Are we going to resume home health quality publicly on 1 January 2022? What are the dates of - what are the collection dates? I put down third quarter, but I may have missed it.

Charles Padgett: So are you asking what data will be reported publicly during that time?

(Deirdre Onquet): No, I'm asking what are the collection dates? So is it like - so when you gave the hospice information you were talking about quarter four of this year, quarter three of that year? I didn't hear all of that for home health.

Charles Padgett: Okay. So we have - I mean, it's a lot to go over because it varies per measure.

(Deirdre Onquet): Okay.

Charles Padgett: (Unintelligible) are the same. But that information was published in this past year's home health final rule. That information is available.

And that information is also available on our public reporting tip sheet. So there is one for both hospice and one for home health. And you can find those tip sheets on the Home Health Quality Reporting Web site under the public

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reporting. That will be there for you. And we've broken it down for you within that tip sheet.

(Deirdre Onquet): Okay. Okay. On the tip sheet, okay. Now my question for Lori is if we are the project for the shorter CAHPS survey. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. How much shorter is it?

Lori Teichman: Oh. First of all, I just want to say one thing. When we do these field tests, it doesn't interfere with the regular collection of home health CAHPS.

(Deirdre Onquet): Okay.

Lori Teichman: We will continue conducting the HHCAHPS Survey for all HHAs while we conduct the Mode Experiment. For HHAs in the Mode Experiment, we will continue their HHCAHPS Survey plus use their leftover sample for conducting the Mode Experiment for them.

So now I forgot what your question was. Oh my gosh.

(Deirdre Onquet): My question is, how much shorter is the pilot questionnaire? Because we've been begging for a shorter CAHPS survey forever?

Lori Teichman: I think it's about - let's see. I think it's about eight questions shorter, but it's also a replacement for some questions with some newer questions because a few years ago we had many focus groups and then followed by a whole series of individual interviews to test out new questions for issues that were raised in focus groups.

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And we had to focus grouped several different places of the country. We tried to make it as diverse as possible so we could pick up a variety of issues and I also think - we'll have to see how it all tests out. But also the ordering of the questions, I think, is preferable because we had some information where people said that it might be better if you group these questions together and these clearly don't work.

So we had tested that as well to see if that actually was better. We kind of - you know, we tested like several different types of configurations of the same questions, just reordering them. And so I think we have a nice test instrument. We'll see how it goes.

That doesn't mean that's the exact final one. And we may even make it shorter from the test one because that happened years ago with this instrument. It was much bigger.

(Deirdre Onquet): Yes, it sure was. I remember. Oh that would be so lovely.

Lori Teichman: Oh, so you've been around with this for a while then. You understand, yes.

(Deirdre Onquet): I've been around for a while, yes, ma'am.

Lori Teichman: I've been around longer, I'm sure. But that's beside the point. I know I've been around longer. But something interesting about the next public reporting period, it marks the 40th public reporting period for Home Health CAHPS.

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(Deirdre Onquet): Yeah. Now when will that resume publicly, the CAHPS?

Lori Teichman: CAHPS is going to start again in January and it represents data for the period of July 2020 through June 2021.

(Deirdre Onquet): Thank you, guys, so very much. I appreciate the information.

Lori Teichman: Sure. You're welcome. Happy holidays, too.

(Deirdre Onquet): Happy holidays to you, too.

Lori Teichman: Thank you.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (Suzanne Clark).

(Suzanne Clark): Hello. Can you hear me okay?

Lori Teichman: Yes, we can.

Charles Padgett: Go ahead.

(Suzanne Clark): Okay. Good. Okay. My question is also on the CAHPS Survey that I know it is being publicly reported in January. And can you let us know when the preview report for the star ratings will be released onto the CAHPS Web site?

And then if you happen to know...

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((Crosstalk))

Lori Teichman: Sure. Is this for home health care or for hospice?

(Suzanne Clark): Yes, home health.

Lori Teichman: Oh, for home health, you're going to be getting a preview report on Thursday.

(Suzanne Clark): Okay, great. Because I've been looking for it. Thank you.

Lori Teichman: We'll have star ratings now. One thing I should mention. Since we went to Care Compare, you probably have noticed that it's very easy to find the overall the summary, you know, the averaging one of all the star ratings. That's posted very clearly, like on the first page.

But if you want to see all the other star ratings on Care Compare for home health care, you have to drill down. You know, you have to keep on pressing the area that says more information, more information. That's the only way it's showing right now.

That may change. But if you kind of look at how does this compare to Home Health Compare with Home Health Compare you didn't have to go down that far to see the star ratings on all the individual measures but now you do.

You know, it's just the way it's set up. But I wanted you to know that you will see on your Home Health CAHPS preview reports the star ratings like right

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there next to all the measures. But it's not going to be laid out the exact same way on Care Compare.

(Suzanne Clark): Okay. Thank you very much information.

((Crosstalk))

Lori Teichman: The information, the data and the stars or whatever, the data is the same, but the actual view of it will look different.

(Suzanne Clark): Okay. Thank you very much.

Lori Teichman: You're welcome.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is from (Chad Jorgensen).

(Chad Jorgensen): Hello. Can you hear me?

Jill Darling: Yes, we can. Go ahead.

(Chad Jorgensen): Okay. All right. So always good phone calls, always good conversation. Love the information we get. I'm going to go all the way back to the beginning here and talk about the OASIS-D data set.

I know from our standpoint we were just starting to do some requirements gathering to get ready for OASIS-E. I just want absolute confirmation, right?

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So I think you guys said, and based on the Web site, OASIS-D is going to be extended through November 2024.

Does that mean we are not using OASIS-E until that point? And then what would be the start date for potentially using OASIS-E?

Charles Padgett: Hi, this is Charles. So, you know what, I don't have the answer to that question. I mean, you are correct that the OASIS-D has been extended through November 30, 2024. However, you know, should the OASIS-E ever come into play, you know, if we submitted a PRA package that was approved, it would then supersede this.

I'm not saying that's happening. I believe this is, as you stated. However I would just suggest that you submit your question to the open door forum help desk and we will get that answered for you with an absolute confirmation.

(Chad Jorgensen): Absolutely. Perfect. Thank you.

Charles Padgett: You bet.

Coordinator: And once again, if you would like to ask a question, please press star 1. Our next question is from (Melissa Weigam).

(Melissa Weigam): Hi. My question was also about the extension of OASIS-D and when OASIS-E goes into effect. So thank you. I think my question was answered.

Charles Padgett: You bet. Thanks for the question.

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Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question comes from (Sandy Nelson). (Sandy), your line is open for your question. Please check your mute feature. We are not able to hear you.

(Sandy Nelson): Hi. This is (Sandy). You can hear me now, correct?

Coordinator: Yes, we can. Thank you.

(Sandy Nelson): My questions about the hospice CAHPS. Not about anything that you really talked about today, but just to clarify that even when the primary caregiver responds and puts their name and phone number on the survey, we're not allowed to contact them even if they have comments that require - they have questions or anything in the survey. Correct?

Lori Teichman: Hi. This is Lori answering for that. There is a feature in Home Health CAHPS that there is a question, would you allow your responses to be shared with the facility that you're answering the questions about? So the respondent has to say yes on that.

I think that in the Hospice CAHPS Survey, it's not a standard question or like one that typically you will see on it. And what would happen is the hospice facility would have to add that question on it.

If there's not a question that asks for the respondent's agreement that their responses can be shared, then the responses cannot be shared.

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(Sandy Nelson): Okay. So you're saying we wouldn't be able to contact them, even though we do get that information? We do get...

Lori Teichman: No. Unless the respondent agrees to it.

(Sandy Nelson): Because there is a question that says, you know, they can stay anonymous or not. And most actually don't seem to do that. But there is a question like that where they - if they want their information shown or not.

Lori Teichman: Yes. Generally it's just worded. Would you allow your answers to be shared with the home health agency or with the hospice, I guess, and they have to say yes.

(Sandy Nelson): But even if they say yes, we're not supposed to contact them, like to do any service recovery.

Lori Teichman: Oh, like, you're supposed to contact - well, I don't...

(Sandy Nelson): But in the rule - you know, on the Web site and stuff, it says that we're not supposed to, but.

Lori Teichman: Okay. Yes, I didn't know that myself. I'm sorry, I did not know that. Even if they agree on the survey that their answers can be shared with the hospice, they're not supposed to be contacted by the hospice.

(Sandy Nelson): It doesn't, I mean, I don't know that it clearly - I don't know that it spells it out that clearly and that's why I was asking because, you know, it's just helpful for

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service recovery. And a lot of times the issues are things that they really appreciate a follow-up on.

Lori Teichman: Yes. I think that their responses can be shared with the hospice but the hospice is not supposed to contact the respondent.

(Sandy Nelson): You know, we see most of our surveys come back with the caregiver's name and phone number on them. It's unusual honestly.

Lori Teichman: And you've never contacted them. I see.

(Sandy Nelson): So we just were trying to get clarity on that.

Lori Teichman: I don't think that the hospices are supposed to contact the survey respondents.

(Sandy Nelson): All right.

Lori Teichman: We can confirm that with you.

(Sandy Nelson): Okay.

Lori Teichman: Yes. I wonder how I can get back to you on this? Is there any way you could send this by email...

(Sandy Nelson): Sure.

Lori Teichman: ... you can send your question to the ODF mailbox?

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(Sandy Nelson): So where do I need to - where do I send it to?

Lori Teichman: Jill, would you mind...

Jill Darling: Yes, sure.

Lori Teichman: ...providing that email?

Jill Darling: Sure.

Lori Teichman: Thank you.

Jill Darling: Sure. If you received the agenda today, the email is on the agenda.

(Sandy Nelson): Okay. Yes. I will go there then. Thank you.

Jill Darling: Okay, perfect.

(Sandy Nelson): Thanks a lot.

Lori Teichman: Thank you.

Coordinator: And I am showing no further questions at this time.

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Jill Darling: All right. Great, everyone. We appreciate your time as always. And you'll get about almost a half an hour back. Happy holidays and we will talk with you next year. So thanks everyone.

Coordinator: Thank you. This does conclude today's conference. You may disconnect at this time.

End

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