

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Open Door Forum: Home Health, Hospice and DME
Moderator: Jill Darling
Wednesday, January 11, 2023
2:00 pm ET

Coordinator: In a listen-only mode until the question and answer session. During that time, if you'd like to ask a question, you may press Star 1.

I'd like to inform all parties that today's call will be recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect to this time.

I'd now like to turn the call over to your Miss Jill Darling. You may begin whenever you're ready.

Jill Darling: Great. Thank you, (Becca). And good morning, good afternoon everyone and happy new year. Welcome to the first Home Health, Hospice & DME Open Door Forum of 2023.

I do have one brief announcement before we dive into the agenda today. 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 dive in with our first speaker, Susan Bauhaus, who will speak on the extension of the rule add on payment for HHAs in low population density areas for CY 2023.

Susan Bauhaus: Thank you, Jill, and good morning. In accordance with Section 4137 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, CMS is extending the 1% rural add-on payment for home health periods and visits that end in calendar year 2023 for counties classified as low population density.

CMS will increase the 30-day base payment rates by the 1% rural add-on before applying any case mix and wage index adjustments. There are no changes to the fixed dollar loss ratio, budget neutrality factors, or final base payment rate. As a reminder, the rural add-on payment designations can be found under the Coding and Billing information section on the Home Health Prospective Payment System Web page at [cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov).

We have issued a correction to CR 12957 reflecting the extension of the rural add-on policy in the calendar year 2023 rate update. This can be found on [cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov) in the Transmittals section of the regulations and guidance tab. Next, I will hand it over to Marcie O'Reilly for an update on the expanded HHVBP.

Marcie O'Reilly: Thank you. Today, I'm Marcie O'Reilly, the coordinator for the Expanded Home Health Value-Based Purchasing Model. I'm joining you today to provide a few reminders about the expanded Model.

The first performance year for the expanded Model began on January 1. CMS will use quality measure data from calendar year 2023 to assess each home health agency's performance for the calendar year 2025 payment year.

We have developed many resources to assist home health agencies with understanding the expanded HHVBP Model. In addition to the Expanded HHVBP Model Guide, FAQs and monthly newsletters resources, including Webinars and podcasts for quality measures, quality improvement, available

reports, and the total performance score and payment adjustment methodology are available on the expanded HHVBP Model Web page.

The URL for this Web page is included in the agenda within the calendar appointment for today's ODF. Please if you choose to Google information about the Model, use the term expanded HHVBP Model, not just HHVBP Model. And the Web page will be at the top of the list in the search results. If you Google just HHVBP Model the link at the top of the page - well on top of the query will take you to the Web page for the original Model. If you land on the Web page for the original Model there is a link in the banner at the top of the page that will take you to the expanded Model's Web page and all of these resources.

Next week on January 19th, from 4:30 to 5:00 pm Eastern Time, we will host a live event entitled. First Performance Year Quick Guide. During this event the team will provide HHAs with a review of what to expect in the first performance year of the expanded Model, including a timeline for expanded Model performance reports and strategic planning activities to consider leading to a recommendation that HHAs conduct a strategic review of quality performance, and development and implement action plan to address identified opportunities for improvement. The recording, slides, transcript and a downloadable resource guide will be available on the expanded HHVBP Model Web page under the topic of Quality Improvement.

In November, we provided HHA the first of three Pre-Implementation Performance Reports, also known as a PIPR. This report provides each HHA with their specific performance data for the quality measure set used in the expanded Model with comparison to HHAs nationally within their peer cohort. This report also provides preliminary achievement threshold and benchmarks for each measure.

Using the most current data they have all the second of the three PIPRs will be available in iQIES on or about January 26. We encourage you to download your reports and review them.

Please submit questions about policies and resources for the expanded Model to our help desk at hhvbpquestions@lewin.com. This email address is also listed within today's agenda.

And if you are not receiving emails from CMS about the expanded HHVBP model, please go to our Web site and join our list serve. Thank you. I'll now hand it over to (Lori Luria).

Beth Simon: Thank you. I'm Beth Simon. And I'll be presenting on behalf of (Lori Luria) today. And first I'd like to share that the annual training for the HHCAHPS survey is later this month in January 2023.

Training slides for the self-paced introductory training will be posted on the HHCAHPS Survey Web site on January 23. Registrants for the introductory training who want to become approved HHCAHPS Survey vendors will receive an email with a link to an online evaluation certification to be completed between February 1 and February 15 following the training.

All current HHCAHPS survey vendors must attend an Update Training Webinar on Tuesday, January 31 from noon to 2:00 Eastern Time. Registration for both of the trainings started on Thursday, December 1, 2022 on the HHCAHPS Survey Web site.

We posted the HHCAHPS Coordination Team Quarterly Review last week on January 3. It's a one-page update of key dates and a feature item of interest. It's a quick and good read available at homehealthcahps.org.

Please remember that the next data submission deadline for HHCAHPS survey data is January 19, 2023 for the July through September 2022 sample month.

All HHAs should now start checking in for, excuse me, all HHAs should now start checking in the For HHAs portal on the HHCAHPS Web site to see if their vendors submitted their data. And this is an important reminder.

All HHAs with fewer than 60 patients from April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022 should complete the CY 2024 HHCAHPS Survey Participation Exemption Request Form by March 31, 2023 available on the HHCAHPS Web site.

All HHAs with 60 or more HHCAHPS eligible patients from April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022 should be participating in HHCAHPS survey every month from April 2022 through March 2023 to meet the requirements of the CY 2024 HHA APU.

All HHAs that are currently participating in the HHCAHPS survey monthly data collection should not stop participating in the survey if they now have low patient counts. All HHAs should continue their survey participation through March 2023 as long as their patient counts were big enough in the reference count year, which is the previous year of April of 2021 through March 2022, to participate in HHCAHPS in the current year of April 2022 through March 2023.

And just a reminder, as always, if you have any technical assistance questions about the HHCAHPS survey or need help switching vendors, please contact the HHCAHPS coordination team at hhcahps@rti.org or give them a call at 866-354-0985. And thank you. I'll turn it over to Jermama Keys.

Jermama Keys: Thanks Beth. Good afternoon, everyone. Today, I have several announcements about the Home Health Quality Reporting Program.

First, we have a public reporting update. The next Care Compare refresh will take place on January 18, 2023. The preview reports related to the January 2023 refresh of the home health data on Care Compare were released to providers on October the 6th of 2022. And that preview report ended on November the 4th of 2022.

We'd also like to share a quick update about QAO performance reports. For January of 2023 interim QAO performance reports currently available in your iQies folders.

This report includes OASIS assessments completed during the period of October 2021 through September 30, 2022. This includes OASIS assessments submitted by October 31 of 2022.

The next interim QAO performance report will be available in your iQIES folders in April of 2023. This report will include OASIS assessment completed during the period of January 1 of 2022 through December 31 of 2022. And it will include OASIS assessment submitted by January 31 of 2023.

Finally, we have an announcement about OASIS. As a reminder, the effective date for OASIS-E is January 1 of 2023. The final OASIS-E user manual was posted to the HHQRP Web site on December the 14 of 2022. Please visit the

OASIS user's manual Web page to access this particular resource. In addition, the final OASIS-E instrument is available for download on the OASIS data sets Web page.

Next, I have some hospice updates. And we would like to share some updates for the HHQRP public reporting. Our next Care Compare refresh will take place in February of 2023.

As part of the February 2023 refresh for the Hospice Quality Reporting Program CMS will conduct the annual update of the public use file, or PUF data, on Care Compare. The Care Compare will display PUF data for the calendar years of 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Next, I would like to share a couple updates about HOPE. The HOPE beta test assessment data collection is now complete. Through spring of 2023 our beta test team will analyze all of the data and feedback collected from the hospice teams to inform decisions for the final version of our HOPE tool and the implementation of HOPE.

We expect to provide some additional updates about HOPE development and testing during upcoming HQRP forums in 2023. Please check our Web site regularly for more information about the forums.

Finally, we have an announcement about HQRP quarterly updates. The quarter four 2022 HQRP quarterly update will be published on the Requirement and Best Practice page of the HQRP Web site this month, HQRP Web site this month.

And I'm noting that after January of 2023 the HQRP will no longer post a quarterly update document. Instead, we are encouraging providers interested

in receiving regular updates to sign up for quarterly informational emails that will be provided by Swingtech.

Providers who would like to receive Sling text quarterly emails can add or update their email addresses by sending an email to qrphelp@swingtech.com. Please visit the HQRP Requirements and Best Practice Web page for more information on how to sign up for these emails and to download any previous quarterly Swing Tech emails. qrphelp@slingtech.com. Please visit the HQRP Requirements and Best Practice Web page for more information on how to sign up for these emails and to download any previous quarterly Sling Tech emails.

We would like to provide a quick update on health equity. The CMS provided a health equity TEP which took place in November and December of 2022. A report, in reference to this TEP, will be published at a later date detailing the TEPs discussions and their recommendations.

Lastly, the Special Focus Program also had a TEP that took place in late 2022. And that report is scheduled to be published at a later date this year detailing the TEPs discussions and their recommendations as well. That is all that I have for HHQRP today. And I'll pass it back to Jill.

Jill Darling: Great. Thanks, Jermama, Beth, Marcie and Susan. (Becca), we will now open for Q&A please.

Coordinator: If you'd like to ask a question at this time please press Star 1. Again, that is Star 1. Thank you. Our first question comes from Tracy Wodatch. Your line is now open.

Tracy Wodatch: Thank you very much. I'm Tracy Wodatch from the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home. We are a trade association for the home health and hospice providers in Connecticut.

Just wanted to double-check if you are hearing anything about problems with OASIS-E not transmitting in the iQIES due to a discharge code not being accepted. I'm hearing some problems when the discharge code from the hospital is - and the discharge code going to the hospital is listed as anything other than unknown it's being rejected.

Jermama Keys: Tracy, I have not, but if you have specific questions that are in reference to that submission you can forward those questions to either our Home Health Quality Questions help desk or specifically to the iQIES help desk.

That home health quality questions is as stated home, the word home, the word health, the word quality, the word questions@cms.hhs.gov. And then the iQIES technical help desk is going to be iqies@cms.hhs.gov.

Tracy Wodatch: Thank you.

Jermama Keys: No problem.

Coordinator: Next question comes from (Cody Reber). Your line is now open.

(Cody Reber): Hi. Thank you for taking my question. Do you have a date for when the potentially preventable hospitalization measure is scheduled to be introduced in official CMS programs including Care Compare, VBP or others, and whether that will actually replace the existing 60 day hospitalization measure?

Jermama Keys: Marcie, I'm not sure if you have a specific date for the VBP program. But if you could bullet that specific question so that I'm not off in any way by month to the Home Health Quality Questions help desk as well.

Marcie O'Reilly: And for HHVBP changes to the applicable measure set will have to go through notice and comment rulemaking. So, I would just keep an eye out for when we make that proposal if we do.

(Cody Reber): Thank you.

Coordinator: Next question comes from (Margaret Aldec). Your line is now open.

(Margaret Aldec): Thank you for taking my question. We complete OASIS-E for all assessments completed that were completed on or after January 1 knowing that the quality data will be collected by CMS for the value-based purchasing.

I'm just wondering how OASIS-E will - data will affect our quality outcomes that were initially provided to CMS in OASIS-D. For example, a patient was admitted with OASIS-D and is discharged with OASIS-E. Would that be all these patients will be taken into consideration? I'm just curious how that will be addressed.

Marcie O'Reilly: And this question was specific to your HHVBP measures. This was - did I hear that correctly?

(Margaret Aldec): Yes, it's a quality measure.

Marcie O'Reilly: Oh, I know we're in the process right now of updating documents related to the effects of OASIS-E. And I, sorry off the top of my head, have to look and see if the quality guide has that updated in it yet. But we will be giving you

guys information related to that. But I'll make a note to double-check when we will be getting, and we'll get that out as soon as possible.

Coordinator: As a reminder if you'd like to ask a question please press Star 1. Our next question comes from (Cody Reber).

(Cody Reber): Thanks for taking an extra question. Do you have an update on when CMS will provide the updated risk adjustment models using OASIS data?

Jermama Keys: Hi, (Cody). I do not. I don't have a specific date for that at this time.

Marcie O'Reilly: And for HHVBP I think we are working on the TNC measures to update those risk adjustments as well. So, they will be coming shortly.

(Cody Reber): Thank you for that update. And if I may ask one additional question, when can we expect to see the measure tables for OASIS-E? I think that's a little ways out, but curious if you have an estimate on the time for outcomes, process measures, PAEs, et cetera? Thank you.

Jermama Keys: So, I would love to be able to give you something specific, but it is the ways out. And I would hate to try to lock in a date at this time.

(Cody Reber): Okay. Thank you very much. Appreciate taking all the questions.

Jermama Keys: No problem.

Coordinator: Next question comes from (Grant Kim Griffith). Your line is now open.

(Grant Kim Griffith): We were just wondering if there were any updates on the COVID waivers?

Susan Bauhaus: It - are you referencing a specific program?

(Grant Kim Griffith): For the hospice because I thought they were expiring. The latest waiver is expiring this month.

Susan Bauhaus: I'll have to get back to you, if you could phrase the question or just give us some additional detail in reference to the specific waiver. If you could forward that to the actual ODF mailbox as it may be more than one entity that needs to look into that.

(Grant Kim Griffith): Thank you.

Coordinator: Next question...

Jill Darling: And a reminder, this is Jill, the Home Health Hospice DME Open Door Forum email is on the agenda.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from (Kelly Crane). Your line is now open.

(Kelly Crane): Yes. I have a couple questions with some of the new items in OASIS-E. Just wondering CMS's intent on N0415 high risk medications.

When it talks about the class of drugs and asks if the patient is taking that class of drug. And then it asks the indication if there is an indication for that medication or for that drug class.

There's some questions, with a lot of people I have talked to, about if a patient is taking that drug class of medication for an off-label use, for example if they're taking antipsychotic, but they're taking it for sleep not for psychosis,

then do you mark indication as, yes, there's an indication because there's a reason they're taking that medication or is it looking at the indication for the drug class?

You know, would you mark indication for an off-label use I guess is the simplest way to phrase that question. And just kind of what is the intent or the guidance with that because it wasn't clear in the manual.

Jermama Keys: So, for that particular question it has come up before, and we are referring providers to the guidance - although we are referring providers to the manual. If you can phrase your specific question so that we can keep a tally of the types of questions that are coming in it would be great. We'd appreciated it.

If you could send that to the actual Home Health Quality reporting - Quality Questions, I'm sorry, mailbox. And that way you'll be able to get a response to your specific question in reference to that medication question will be.

(Kelly Crane): Okay. And do you have that email address?

Jermama Keys: Yes, it's gonna be the word home, the word health, the word quality and the word questions with an S at cms dot hhs dot gov.

(Kelly Crane): Thank you. And then my other question was also about a new OASIS item and what to mark. So, I just will forward that there as well then, probably.

Jermama Keys: Yes. So, if you could include both of those questions in reference to the medication and your other question it'd be great.

(Kelly Crane): Perfect. Okay. Thank you.

Jermama Keys: No problem. Thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Kim Pasteur). Your line is now open.

(Kim Pasteur): Hi. I thought I just read that Biden, President Biden did extend the Public Health Emergency. So, I'm wondering if - does that mean that - I was like three - I just looked it up before this - the call, like three hours ago. So, would that pertain to our - I'm in home care, our Public Health Emergency Waiver?

Man: Yes, I think since that directive has been out there I think obviously we have a process internally that has to - that we have to adhere to, to get any kind of direction or guidance out. So, look for any of that guidance forthcoming.

(Kim Pasteur): Great. Thank you very much.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Laura Pezadoni). Your line is now open.

(Laura Pezadoni): Hi, sorry. That was me. I was just going to clarify the same thing that the Public Health Emergency has been extended for the - so that's all - that's all I had.

Coordinator: Okay, thank you. Our next question comes from (Christy Biller). Your line is now open.

(Christy Biller): I also had an OASIS-E specific questions. So, I will send an email to the Home Health Quality Questions. Thank you.

Coordinator: Okay, so there are no further questions at this time.

Jill Darling: All right. Well thank you everyone for joining us today. We appreciate your questions, comments. And if you do think of something after today's call please feel free to send it into the Home Health Hospice DME Open Door Forum email which is listed on the agenda. And thanks everyone. Happy new year. And we will talk to you next time.

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