"Home Health Compare" Website Guide

Revised 10/29/03. This guide describes the improved site navigation that will be available with the national launch of the Home Health Quality Initiative in November, 2003.

To begin a search for a home health agency, go to *www.medicare.gov*.

Select *Search Tool* in the left tool bar; in the right column, select *Home Health Compare*.

When the *Home Health Compare* page opens, the default screen is the *Search* screen.

There are four tabs at the top of the screen: *Search, About, Data Details* and *Resources*.
- *Search* (default) – allows you to find home health agencies in a specific area.
- *About* – provides information about *Home Health Compare*, how to search, and how to use the data.
- *Data Details* – provides information about the quality measures, how to use *Home Health Compare*, data collection, and a note to home health agencies.
- *Resources* – provides additional helpful sources of information, including CMS publications, frequently asked questions, related websites and a glossary of terms used in *Home Health Compare.*

Important note: The search feature for home health agencies is based on where the home health agency has provided services in the past (patient's zip code). You should contact the home health agency to find out if the agency still provides services in the area you have searched.

Begin Search
Step 1. This is the first screen you will see. The *Search* tab will be highlighted. Here, you may search by state, county, zip code or agency name. Select the best option for your search.

Note: for all search options except zip code, you will need to choose a state. After choosing a state or zip code, click on *Next Step* or <Enter> to go to the *Step 2 of 4* page.

Step 2 of 4. In the first sentence of this page, you will see the number of home health agencies meeting your search criteria. On this page, you have the ability to narrow your search by selecting a *Medicare Covered Service Offered.* Then, select *Next Step* or click on *Select All Services*.

Navigating through the search tool

Under the Search tab, you can see the words <u>*Search Criteria*</u> *> Select Services* displayed. This is called a "bread crumb" trail, which will display a path of each page as you perform a search in Home Health Compare. Click on the underlined links to return to previous steps in your Search. Click on Search Criteria to go back and start a new search.

Step 3 of 4. The site displays basic information about the home health agencies that meet your search criteria. Information provided includes name, address, telephone number, type of ownership, Medicare certification date and Medicare covered services offered.

> **Sort Options.** You may sort the agencies alphabetically, by name (default display) or in descending order by the number of Medicare patients that they have served by clicking on the appropriate link. These options are found just above the list of home health agencies.

> You may select up to 10 agencies and click *Next Step* at the bottom of the page.

Step 4 of 4. Select *Quality Measures.* You must select one or more quality measures to proceed. You may click *Select All* at the bottom of the page to view information for all of the quality measures. To start over, click *Reset Checkboxes*.

Home Health Results **page.** At the top of this page, the *Search* tab is removed and two new tabs are displayed, *Home Health Agencies* and *Quality Graphs*.

This page provides specific information for each home health agency selected as well as contact information for 1-800-MEDICARE, the state home health hotline and the state quality improvement organization (QIO).

A new feature allows you to "compress" the information displayed for each home health agency to display only the name. This feature allows you to "close" the detailed agency information if you determine it does not meet your needs.

To close or compress individual home health agency information, click on the small box to the left of the home health agency name, with the minus (-) sign.

Compare Quality Measures. If you wish to compare home health agencies, you may click on the *Quality Graphs* tab at the top of the page or click on *Compare Quality Measures* at the bottom of the of the *Home Health Results* page. This will open the *Quality Measure Information* page.

- **Quality Graphs.** On this page, you can compress each quality measure and view only the ones in which you are most interested. Each measure is displayed in bar graph format with text describing why the measure is important.

  The first bar in each graph is the average for all the home health agencies in the United States. The next bar is the average for all home health agencies in the selected state, followed by the rate for each home health agency selected. If there is no data for a measure for a specific agency, an explanation will be displayed (e.g., too small, less than 20 patients; not enough data, greater than six months of data needed).

To close or compress individual quality measures, you may click on the small box to the left of the quality measure, with the minus (-) sign.

To open the individual quality measure information, click on the small box to the left of the home health agency name, with the plus (+) sign.

Helpful Hints

- In Steps 1 through 4, if you wish to begin a new search, you may do so by clicking the *Search* tab at the top of the screen or in the "bread crumbs" below the *Home Health Compare* header.
- At any time, you may return to a prior step in the search process by selecting one of the "bread crumbs" below the *Home Health Compare* header.
- If you wish to begin a new search on the *Home Health Agencies* and/or *Quality Graphs* pages, you may do so by clicking on *New Search for Home Health Information* at the bottom of the page.