

The text that follows will be provided to nursing homes during the preview process and will accompany the facility-specific data that will be made available as described on the 9/20/02 Satellite Broadcast. It is being provided here as an informational handout only.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is proud to announce the national roll-out of the Nursing Home Quality Initiative. Beginning November 2002, consumers and providers will be able to view facility-specific quality measures for each Medicare & Medicaid-certified nursing home at www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/home. The measures posted in November 2002 will reflect the care delivered to post-acute care nursing home residents between January and June 30, 2002 and to chronic care residents between April and June 30, 2002. Subsequent updates will occur quarterly.

These quality measures have four intended purposes, 1) to give information about certain quality measures to be used to help consumers choose a nursing home for themselves or others, 2) to give consumers information about the care at nursing homes where they or their family already live, 3) to stimulate discussion about quality of care, and 4) to give data for quality improvement efforts. The current quality measures have been chosen because they are measurable and don't require nursing homes to prepare additional reports. They are valid and reliable. However, they are not benchmarks, thresholds, guidelines, or standards of care.

As a courtesy to all Medicare and Medicaid-certified nursing homes in the United States, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, CMS will allow nursing homes to preview their own quality measure data prior to posting in November. The preview period will be from October 14 through October 22. The facility specific rates will be available via each facility's QIES mailbox (folder). The purpose of the preview is to provide nursing homes an opportunity to view their rates prior to the public release of this information.

For more details about the Nursing Home Quality Initiative, the quality measures, how these measures were selected, how these measures differ from the Survey and Certification Quality Indicators, and what your preview will look like, please visit the official CMS website for professionals at www.cms.hhs.gov. Select the professionals category, then providers, then nursing homes. You will then be at the home page for the Nursing Home Quality Initiative at www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/nursinghomes/nhi. This site contains FAQs, or Frequently Asked Questions, that are updated as needed. Viewers can register at specific FAQs and will receive notification when that FAQ is updated.

Any facilities with questions or concerns regarding their specific quality measures, or concerns not answered in the FAQs, can contact the Nursing Home Quality Initiative Preview Help Desk at 1-888-676-0724. This telephone line will be in operation from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM Mountain DaylightTime throughout the duration of the preview (October 14 - 22, 2002) to respond to your specific concerns and inquiries. Note, if your question is about OSCAR data, please contact your State Survey Agency.

10/8/02