DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
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CMS
CENTERS for MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

Center for Medicaid and State Operations

S&C 02-12

DATE: January 9, 2002

FROM: Director
              Survey and Certification Group

Subject: Implementation of Outcome-Based Quality Improvement (OBQI) Reports -
              ACTION

TO: Associate Regional Administrators, DMSO
              State Survey Agency Directors

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide follow-up information as discussed in the FY
2002 Budget Call letter and to provide guidance to state survey agencies and regional offices
(ROs) concerning the implementation of the OBQI reports. The 2002 Budget Call letter reports
that CMS expects to release the risk-adjusted OBQI reports and because these reports were less
self-explanatory than the Outcome-Based Quality Monitoring (OBQM) reports, we would work
with the states to ensure their quality and understanding. The OBQI reports are the third and
final of the Outcome and Assessment Information Set (OASIS) based reports. These agency-
level reports allow individual home health agencies (HHAs) to assess their own performance
with respect to patient outcomes and compare their performance to a national reference or
benchmark. In addition, HHAs may then use the OBQI data to target and develop plans of
action to improve or maintain HHA performance and patient outcomes. These reports will be
accessible to all HHAs in February 2002.

The state survey agencies and the OASIS Education Coordinators (OECs) play a crucial role in
the release and use of the OBQI reports. During the week of December 3-6, 2001, CMS held a
national training for the state OASIS Educational Coordinators (OECs) and OASIS Automation
Coordinators (OACs) and outlined their responsibilities. The OECs will be expected to provide
technical assistance to the HHAs in their states regarding the interpretation and use of the OBQI
reports, including how to access and review the reports. However, the OBQI reports are more
complex than the currently available OASIS reports (i.e., the OBQM reports). Additionally,
CMS is providing availability to the OBQI reports from a new computer system designed to
increase security and improve access to the reports. Due to these factors, CMS is requiring that
the state survey agencies conduct a review of a sample of the OBQI reports, based on the number

of HHAs in each state, prior to national implementation in late February. We expect this review will be a one-time activity as we are planning to automate this function in the future.

To accomplish this, each state is expected to review a certain number of their HHAs' OBQI reports during the time preceding national implementation, based on the following algorithm.

State-conducted review

For states having less than 240 Medicare-certified HHAs, OASIS coordinators should conduct a review of 60 reports. (States with less than 60 HHAs should review all the OBQI reports). For states having more than 240 Medicare-certified HHAs, OASIS coordinators should review the OBQI reports from 25 percent of their HHAs. The 25 percent sample can include a selection of targeted HHAs and a random sample of non-targeted HHAs.

The timing of this review process is critical. We expect the OASIS state systems will be ready to allow the OASIS coordinators to access the reports beginning December 24, 2001. The review must be completed by February 15, 2002. During this 2-month period, both OASIS coordinators will require time every week to efficiently conduct this review. Review sheets and instructions were provided at the national training.

For example, if the state has 60 reports to review, the two coordinators will need to review 3 to 4 reports each week for the nine-week period. The amount of time needed to review a single report is about 30 minutes, so the coordinators will need to devote about 2 hours weekly to this project. For states that will conduct a 25 percent review, additional staff and time is needed. We expect that the state survey agency can best determine methods of scheduling and planning to accomplish this task by deferring less critical tasks during this time.

All questions or concerns about the reports should be directed to our contractor, the Iowa Foundation for Medical Care (IFMC) at 1-888-477-7876. Alternatively, questions or concerns can be e-mailed to IFMC at Oasis_help@ifmc.org.

The RO is keenly interested in assisting in this process and will be communicating with the OBQI reviewers on a regular basis. If the state survey agency has major concerns about a specific HHA, the RO requests that you include them in the communication to IFMC.

State Access to Quality Improvement and Evaluation System (QIES)

State agency access to the QIES to Success web site will require a change to the HOSTS file on local workstations. We recommend you work with your local state network administrator to make the following changes. State access to the new OBQI reports is available via the CASPER Reporting tool on the QIES to Success website at http://coqn08:8083. The existing OBQM Reports will also be accessible from the CASPER Reporting tool on QIES to Success. There are two necessary steps that need to be completed in order to access the QIES to Success website:

1. Verify that the correct entry has been made to the 'hosts' file on your local workstation. To do this, find the 'hosts' file (usually in the C:\winnt\system32\drivers\etc for Windows NT or C:\windows directory for Windows 98), open the 'hosts' file with **Notepad only**, and locate (or add, if not present) the following line:

   <div align="center">32.82.41.119   coqn08</div>

2. Firewall upgrades must be completed prior to accessing the website from **local** workstations. However, although not recommended, users may go directly to the server to request the reports prior to having the firewall upgrades completed. If this method is used, please **DO NOT** make any changes to the 'hosts' file on the server. The only step needed to access the QIES to Success website from the server is to enter the appropriate address, http://32.82.41.119:8083, into the browser.

The OBQI Reports, as well as, the OBQM Reports, can be found by selecting the CASPER Reports link located under the CASPER Reporting title on the QIES to Success website. The CASPER Home page will display, requiring entry of the login ID and password necessary to access the reporting tool. For most users, this login ID and password are the same that are currently used when accessing the OBQM Reports.

Additional technical information concerning access to the QIES system, is available in the QTSO Memorandum number 2001-105 that is attached. If assistance is required, please notify the OASIS Help Desk at oasis_help@ifmc.org or 1/888-477-7876.

Uses for OBQI reports

CMS has no regulatory authority at this time to require HHAs to access and use the OBQI reports. CMS expects that HHAs will use the OBQI reports for quality improvement and for consumer education. In CMS-sponsored demonstrations where the OBQI process has been tested, many HHAs have demonstrated significant improvements in targeted patient outcomes, such as decreased hospitalization rates. The OBQI reports represent, for the first time, a system of benchmarking that is case-mix adjusted for each HHA. This means that every HHA can be compared to national reference values regardless of the types of patients it serves compared to another HHA. Therefore, an HHA that strives to provide quality care services to its patients will be able to determine its performance and to identify areas for improvement or reinforcement with the OBQI report.

OBQI Training

The OASIS coordinators are expected to be able to provide further training on the reports to the HHA provider and answer questions about the reports. States are expected to train HHAs to access, read, and interpret the OBQI reports during the 12-month period following the February satellite. Training on accessing, reading and interpreting the reports, and answering questions about the reports is expected to be an ongoing need for new HHAs that will be supported by the state agency. Therefore, CMS expects to provide the state survey agencies with a standardized training package early this spring. The training package will include an outline of the OBQI process developed for use by HHAs to implement the quality improvement process themselves. States <u>will not</u> be advising HHAs on which outcomes to target nor will they be providing advice on care practices. Another CMS contractor is expected to provide this service to HHAs in the future.

Satellite Broadcast

We will be providing training to the home health community, states, and ROs on access and review of the OBQI reports via a national satellite broadcast on February 22, 2002 beginning at 1:00 PM EST. We will have more details about the satellite broadcast on the CMS OASIS web site at http://www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/oasis/hhtrain.htm later. We encourage you to participate in this orientation to the OBQI reports and to invite your HHA providers to share in this next phase of OASIS.

Effective Date: The guidance presented in this memorandum is effective on the date of issuance.

Training: This policy should be shared with all OASIS Educational and Automation coordinators and their managers.

If you have any questions about these instructions, please contact Mary Weakland at 410-786-6835.

(Sandy for Steve)
Steven A. Pelovitz

QTSO MEMORANDUM

MEMO NBR: 2001-105

TO: QIES State Coordinators

CC: CMS Central and Regional Office Contacts

FROM: Jean Eby, QIES Technical Support Office

DATE: December 14, 2001

SUBJECT: **State Users Access to OBQI Reports**

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On Monday, December 17th, access to the new Outcome-based Quality Improvement (OBQI) Reports will be made available via the CASPER Reporting tool on the QIES to Success website at http://coqn08:8083. The existing OBQM Reports will also be accessible from the CASPER Reporting tool on QIES to Success.

There are two necessary steps that need to be completed in order to access the QIES to Success website:

3. Verify that the correct entry has been made to the 'hosts' file on your local workstation. To do this, find the 'hosts' file (usually in the C:\winnt\system32\drivers\etc for Windows NT or C:\windows directory for Windows 98), open the 'hosts' file with **Notepad only**, and locate (or add, if not present) the following line:

> 32.82.41.119   coqn08

4. Firewall upgrades must be completed prior to accessing the website from **local** workstations. However, although not recommended, users may go directly to the server to request the reports prior to having the firewall upgrades completed. If this method is used, please **DO NOT** make any changes to the 'hosts' file on the server. The only step needed to access the QIES to Success website from the server is to enter the appropriate address, http://32.82.41.119:8083, into the browser.

The OBQI Reports, as well as, the OBQM Reports, can be found by selecting the CASPER Reports link located under the CASPER Reporting title on the QIES to

Success website. The CASPER Home page will display, requiring entry of the login ID and password necessary to access the reporting tool. For most users, this login ID and password are the same that are currently used when accessing the OBQM Reports.

*** **NOTE:** Because access will now be through a single, centralized server instead of through the state comm servers, some users whose login ID is not unique at the national level will be given new, slightly altered login IDs. The passwords will not be altered. Steve Halterman will send an email to the OASIS Automation Coordinator in each state, including a list of the users whose login IDs have been altered. These altered login IDs will take effect during the afternoon of Friday, December 14th and will be used for access to the new OBQI Reports, as well as, the existing OBQM Reports and Online Web Reports.

To review the accessing instructions for the reporting tool, please refer to the "OBQI Accessing" PowerPoint file containing the slides that were presented at the OASIS Education Coordinator Conference during the week of December 3, 2001. These slides are now available on the QTSO website at www.qtso.com. They are located on the 'State – News' page under the OASIS Education heading.

When Internet Explorer is used as the browser, there are no plug-ins required in order to view the reports through the CASPER Reporting tool. However, if using Netscape, there is an updated plug-in that must be downloaded prior to viewing reports. That plug-in (npdwe70.dll) is available on the QIES to Success website and will replace the plug-in being used by the current OBQM application.

If assistance is required, please notify the OASIS Help Desk at oasis_help@ifmc.org or 1/888-477-7876.