

Quality Improvement in Iowa's Home Health Agencies a High Point of National Home Care Month

The Iowa Foundation for Medical Care (IFMC), the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for Iowa showcased important efforts by home health agencies to improve their quality of care during the month of November.

"National Home Care Month draws attention to the increasing use of home health care in America," said Kim Downs, IFMC "At IFMC, we work with home health care agencies to help them provide the highest possible levels of care."

Downs highlighted the following successes in quality that have been achieved in Iowa. Covenant Home Health in Waterloo, Dallas County Public Health in Perry, Trinity Regional Medical Center in Fort Dodge, Palo Alto County PHNS in Emmetsburg, Madison County Home Care in Winterset, South Central Home Health Care in Leon, FMCH Home Health Care in Fort Madison, Keokuk Area Hospital Home Health Care in Keokuk, Mercy Home Health Care in Iowa City, Mercy Home Health Care in Cedar Rapids, MMSC Home Care Plus in Marshalltown, Mercy Home Care in Des Moines, and Community Nursing Services in Marshalltown have all achieved statistically significant improvement in their selected target outcome.

IFMC provides training and resources to home health agencies focusing on intensive quality improvement activities as a part of the national Home Health Quality Initiative (HHQI). HHQI is sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In November of 2003, the HHQI launched with a new national Web site, *Home Health Compare* on www.medicare.gov. The online resource offers consumers information to help them make informed decisions about home health care. Consumers can compare quality of care for Medicare-certified home health agencies nationwide by viewing scores for 11 quality measures.

For more information on quality improvement resources for home health agencies, call Joyce Taylor at 800-383-2856, ext. 3730. For more information on quality measures for home health agencies in Iowa, visit www.medicare.gov and click on *Home Health Compare* or call 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227).