



MEDICARE STAR RATINGS

Star Ratings Momentum: Strategies to Strengthen Medicare Performance

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Understanding • Improving • Leveraging Your Ratings



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Today's Agenda

- 01** | **What Are Star Ratings?**
Overview of the CMS rating system
- 02** | **How Ratings Are Calculated**
Measures, weights & methodology
- 03** | **Quality of Patient Care Stars**
OASIS-based clinical measures
- 04** | **Patient Survey (HCAHPS) Stars**
Patient experience measures
- 05** | **Business Impact**
Referrals, VBP & competitive positioning
- 06** | **Strategies to Improve**
Actionable steps for your agency
- 07** | **Tracking & Monitoring**
Tools, dashboards & benchmarking

Section 1: What Are Star Ratings?

Home health agencies have two distinct public-facing star ratings on Medicare's Care Compare — and they are NOT the same thing.



The Overall Star Rating feeds into Care Compare — but Care Compare shows much more.

Section 2: Overall Star Rating vs. Care Compare — Side by Side

★ Overall Star Rating — 7 Measures

OASIS-based only. Drives the Quality of Patient Care star.

- P** Timely Initiation of Care (TIOC)
- O** Improvement in Bathing
- O** Improvement in Ambulation
- O** Improvement in Bed Transferring
- O** Improvement in Oral Medications
- O** Improvement in Dyspnea
- U** Potentially Preventable Hospitalizations

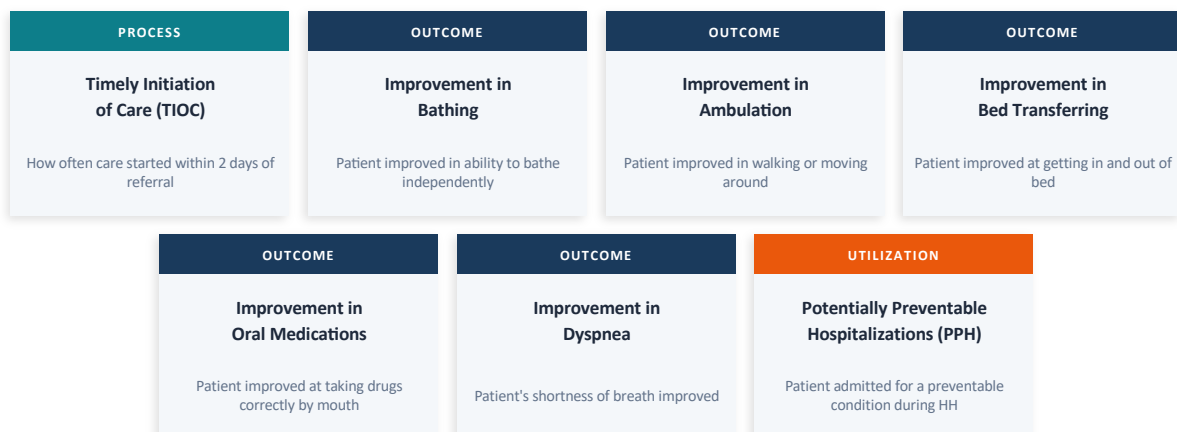
🔍 Care Compare — Full Public Display

Includes Overall Star Rating + additional measures:

- Functional Outcomes**
Ambulation, bed transfers, bathing, self-care at discharge
- Treating Symptoms**
Dyspnea, pressure ulcers/injuries
- Preventing Harm**
TIOC, oral meds, flu shot, medication completions, falls, med lists at discharge
- Preventing Unplanned Hospital Care**
Community discharge, PPH, re-admissions, preventable conditions
- Payment & Value**
Medicare spending per episode vs. national
- HHCAHPS Survey ★**
Professional care, communication, medications/safety, overall rating, recommend agency

Section 3: Overall Star Rating — The 7 OASIS Measures

The Overall Star Rating (Quality of Patient Care) is calculated from 7 measures. These are the measures your agency must focus on to move your star rating.



⚡ KEY INSIGHT:

5 of the 7 measures are outcome-based. Your OASIS accuracy and clinical outcomes directly determine your Overall Star Rating.

Section 4: Patient Survey (HHCAHPS) Stars

HHCAHPS surveys ask patients about their experience with your agency. CMS requires vendors to administer these surveys.

 Care of Patients	 Communication Between Providers & Patients	 Specific Care Issues
Professional skill, respectfulness, listening	Clear explanation of care, medications, warnings	Pain management, breathing, wound care issues
 Overall Rating of Home Health Care	 Willingness to Recommend Agency	 Composite Star Rating
Rating scale 0–10, likelihood to recommend	Would you recommend this agency to others?	Combines all domains into overall star score

Tip: Low survey response rates can skew results. Work with your HHCAHPS vendor on patient outreach to maximize response rates.

Section 5: Business Impact of Star Ratings

1 Patient Referrals

Physicians and discharge planners increasingly use Care Compare to select home health agencies. Higher stars = more referrals.

2 Value-Based Purchasing

CMS VBP program ties Medicare payments directly to quality performance. Top performers earn bonuses; poor performers face payment reductions.

3 Managed Care Contracts

MA plans, ACOs, and bundled payment programs use star ratings as a credentialing criterion. Low stars can disqualify your agency.

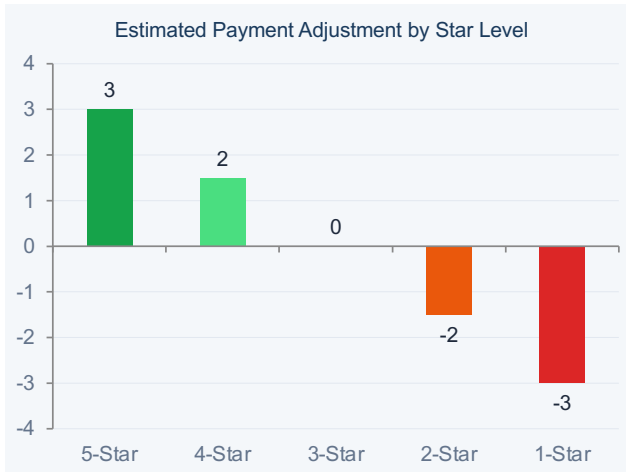
4 Competitive Differentiation

In markets with multiple HH agencies, star ratings are a visible differentiator. 4 & 5-star agencies command stronger market positions.

Star ratings are no longer just a quality metric — they are a business asset.

Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) & Star Ratings

CMS Home Health VBP program distributes 5% of Medicare payments based on quality scores — directly tied to your star rating performance.



VBP Key Facts

- 5% of all Medicare HH payments are at risk under VBP
- Performance period: 12-month rolling window
- Benchmark = national or state average performance
- Achievement + Improvement scores both count
- Florida agencies compete within state cohort
- Higher stars = higher achievement score
- Improvement rewarded even if not at benchmark
- Net payment adjustments range from -3% to +3%

Section 6: Strategies to Improve Your Star Ratings

OASIS Accuracy

Invest in OASIS training. Accurate, defensible coding is the foundation of valid outcome measurement.

Rehospitalization Reduction

Implement evidence-based protocols for CHF, COPD, pneumonia. Improve communication with physicians. Perform Root Cause Analysis

Clinician Education

Train field staff on outcome-driving interventions — ambulation, ADL training, medication management. OASIS competency should be required.

Medication Management

Strengthen drug reconciliation, education documentation, and high-risk medication monitoring.

Data Analytics

Use real-time dashboards to track measure performance at patient, clinician, and agency levels.

Patient Experience

Improve HHCAHPS: onboarding process, communication scripts, complaint resolution, rounding practices.

STARS ALIGNMENT – REQUIRES INTENTION

- Focus Required
- Measured, Monitored and Managed
- Patient Focused Approach – Each and Every Episode
- Drill Down
 - By Location/Branch
 - By Team
 - By Clinician



FOCUS Based on Your Data

- Publicly Reported - Late
- REAL TIME OPTIONS
- QAPI
- Ongoing Cadence
 - Episode by Episode
 - Month over Month
 - Quarterly
 - Annually

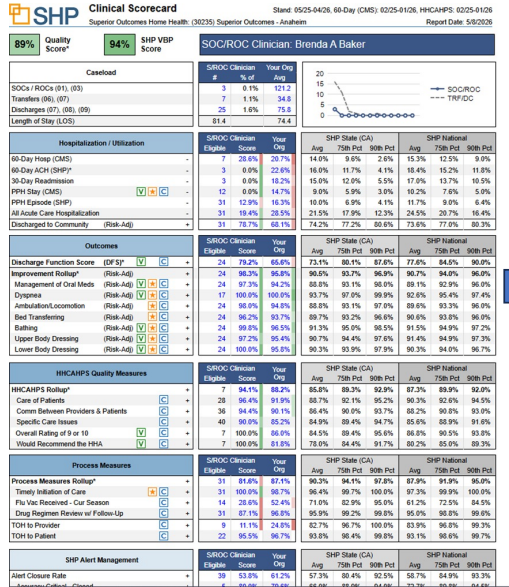


Outcomes Before and After Discharge

 EPISODE MANAGEMENT CLINICAL MANAGER PROTOCOL	
BEGINNING OF DISCHARGE REVIEW: (SOC or Recert)	
OASIS Review and Risk Identification/Reduction OASIS items reviewed; corrections made based on consensus discussion.	
What is the risk for hospitalization or falls? How will each person reduce the risk? Collaborative Goal Setting	
Patient identified goal: Outcome measures at risk:	
Plan of Care and Care Coordination What is the primary focus of POC and is frequency tapered to allow patient to better self-manage? Can visits be coordinated for optimum benefit to the patient and for cost efficiency? What can other team members do to reinforce what you've asked the patient to do between visits? Diagnoses sequencing and coding confirmed or completed	
UPDATE REVIEW: ROC, high risk or high utilization patients, Day 25 of Pay Period Resumption of Care What was the reason for hospitalization? Was the agency called first? Guided Discussion re Goals Is the patient making progress toward goals as expected?	
Plan of Care and Care Coordination Does the POC need to be revised? Is there a change in primary diagnosis?	
PROPOSED RECERT OR D/C REVIEW:	
Planned Recertification 1 Week Prior What is expected to be accomplished in a new cert period not accomplished by now?	
Planned Discharge 1 Week Prior Are there unexplained outcomes that declined or stabilized? Have discharge plans been put in place?	
Unplanned Discharges from Previous Week Why was the discharge unplanned? Was there anything that should have been done differently?	

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Clinician Contribution in Relation to Agency Goals



forvs mazars Sample Home Health Agency
Home Health Outcome Based Performance Incentive Results

Employee Identification				Performance Incentive			
Employee Name	Position	Hire Date	Branch Location	Performance Period Qtr 3 2024			
Nellie Nurse	Full time, CM, RN	01/10/22	Anywhere, USA	Maximum incentive compensation \$ 500			
Performance Data							
Formula	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
	Expected Minimum Performance Measures	Optimal Performance Goals	Actual Performance Results	Maximum Success Measures	Actual Success Measures	Percent of Optimal Goals Achieved	Maximum Incentive Weight
Performance Measures							
Outcomes conference participation	95.0%	98.0%	97.0%	3.0%	2.0%	66.7%	20.0%
Hospitalization rate	14.0%	8.0%	16.0%	6.0%	-2.0%	-33.3%	15.0%
Improved medication management	55.0%	57.0%	54.0%	2.0%	-1.0%	-50.0%	10.0%
Falls	7.5%	3.5%	3.0%	4.0%	4.5%	100.0%	15.0%
Caseload	22	25	23	3	1	33.3%	20.0%
SOC/Recent OASIS completed < 1 days	90.0%	95.0%	92.0%	5.0%	2.0%	40.0%	10.0%
Visit documentation same day	85.0%	92.0%	90.0%	7.0%	5.0%	71.4%	10.0%
Performance incentive results						36.1%	100.0%
Performance incentive compensation						\$	181

OASIS Accuracy: The Foundation of Star Ratings

If your OASIS doesn't reflect true patient status, your outcomes can't improve — no matter how good your care is.

Common Scoring Pitfalls

- Scoring ambulation TOO HIGH at SOC (leaves no room for improvement)
- Not using "usual" performance concept for functional items
- Confusing 'assistance needed' vs. 'assistance provided'
- Ignoring ability to safely perform tasks (not just ability)
- Not using all available clinical info (caregiver reports, PT notes)
- Inconsistency between SOC and ROC assessments
- Over-reliance on patient self-report without clinical correlation

Best Practices

- Episode Management – Evaluation at SOC/ROC
- Provide ongoing education
- Implement OASIS review process before submission
- Use OASIS scrubbing software to catch outliers
- Track clinician-level outcome performance
- Hold monthly QI meetings with focus on specific items

Intentional Focus Required!

Reducing Rehospitalization: A Top Outcome Driver

Hospitalization during the home health episode is one of the most heavily weighted QPC outcome measures.

1

Risk Stratification

Identify high-risk patients at SOC. Flag for intensive monitoring.

2

Timely Starts of Care

Admit within 24–48 hours of referral. Early visits detect acute changes before hospitalization occurs.

3

Physician Communication

Develop clear escalation pathways. Know when to call vs. send to ED.

4

Patient & Caregiver Teaching

Teach symptom recognition. Confirm understanding. Provide written action plans for CHF, COPD, Diabetes.

5

Medication Reconciliation

Review ALL medications at SOC and every visit. Identify high-risk drugs. Confirm adherence.

6

Post-Hospitalization Protocols

Transition care protocols for common diagnoses. Coordinate with SNFs, hospitals, and PCPs on discharge.

Improving HHCAHPS Patient Experience Scores

Patient Journey Touch Points



Intake & Onboarding

Set expectations. Warm welcome. Introduce your agency.



First Visit

Thorough assessment. Build rapport. Explain the plan.



Mid-Episode Check-In

Clinical supervisor call. Address concerns early.



Every Visit

Consistent communication, teach-back, documentation.



Discharge

Final teaching. Follow-up plan. Satisfaction survey mention.

Top HHCAHPS Improvement Tactics

1

Communication Scripts

Train staff on plain-language explanations and teach-back techniques.

2

Response Rate Strategy

Work with your HHCAHPS vendor to optimize survey delivery timing.

3

Complaint Resolution

Fast resolution of patient concerns prevents poor survey responses.

4

Cultural Competency

Train for diverse patient populations — especially in Florida's market.

5

Staff Consistency

Assign consistent aides/nurses to build patient-clinician trust.

6

Leadership Rounding

Manager check-in calls at 72 hrs and 30 days post-admission.

Section 7: Tracking & Monitoring Your Performance

iQIES / CASPER Reports

CMS's official quality measure reports. Pull monthly QM reports and compare to state/national benchmarks.

Care Compare Preview

Review your agency's pending star ratings quarterly before public release. Fix errors before they go live.

HH-CAHPS Vendor Reports

Get monthly patient satisfaction data from your HHCAHPS vendor. Monitor domain-level scores.

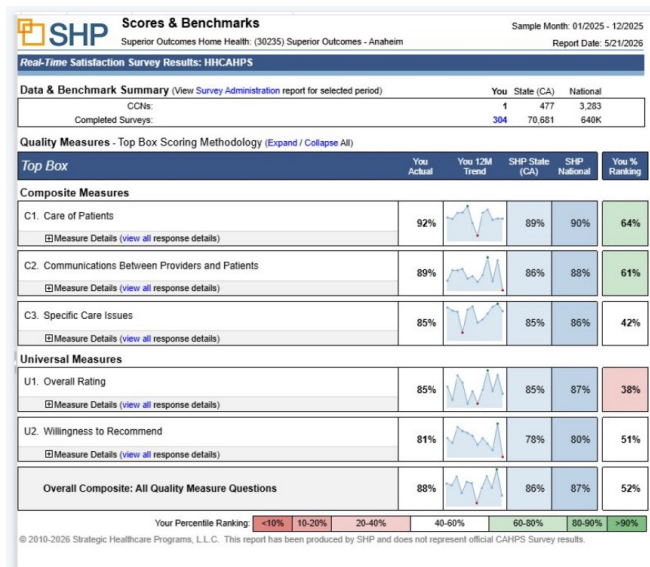
Agency Software / EMR

Most modern HH EMRs have built-in outcome dashboards. Use them for real-time clinician-level monitoring.

Recommended Monitoring Cadence

Weekly	Review new admissions for OASIS risk flags; check hospitalization dashboard
Monthly	Pull CASPER QM reports; review HHCAHPS rolling data; clinician performance review
Quarterly	Preview Care Compare star ratings; compare to state/national benchmarks; QI committee meeting
Annually	Full OASIS inter-rater reliability audit; strategic quality improvement plan update

HHCAHPS Report



Florida vs. National Benchmarks — How Does Your State Stack Up?

All values are percentages. Green = Florida above national. Red = Florida below national.

★ Overall Star Rating Measures	National	Florida	📅 HHCAHPS Patient Survey Measures	National	Florida
PPH (Preventable Hosp.)	10.2%	▲ 10.2%	Overall HHCAHPS Composite	87.2%	▼ 86.1%
Improvement in Oral Meds	89.2%	▲ 90.5%	Care of Patients	90.3%	▼ 89.5%
Improvement in Dyspnea	92.8%	▲ 93.3%	Communication	88.2%	▼ 87.4%
Improvement in Ambulation	89.6%	▲ 90.1%	Specific Care Issues	85.6%	▼ 83.7%
Improvement in Bed Trf.	90.8%	▲ 91.5%	Overall Rating	86.7%	▼ 86%
Improvement in Bathing	91.6%	▲ 92.5%	Would Recommend Agency	80.2%	▼ 79%
Timely Initiation (TIOC)	97.3%	▲ 98.2%			
⚡ Florida outperforms nationally on all 7 Overall Star measures — but trails on all 6 of 6 HHCAHPS domains. Patient experience is Florida's improvement opportunity.					

Your 90-Day Star Rating Action Plan

Days 1–30 Foundation	Days 31–60 Education & Process	Days 61–90 Monitor & Adjust
✓ Pull current CASPER QM report ✓ Identify your 3 lowest-performing measures ✓ Conduct OASIS reviews ✓ Audit your Care Compare listing ✓ Review HHCAHPS vendor dashboard	✓ Train clinicians on OASIS accuracy for target items ✓ Implement rehospitalization risk protocol ✓ Roll out communication scripts for HHCAHPS ✓ Set up real-time outcome dashboards ✓ Launch leadership rounding calls	✓ Review monthly QM data for improvement ✓ Hold QI committee meeting with data review ✓ Adjust protocols based on early results ✓ Preview next quarter's star rating ✓ Share wins with staff; update action plan

Key Takeaways

01

Star Ratings are a public-facing business asset — not just a quality metric. They drive referrals, VBP payments, and managed care contracts.

02

OASIS accuracy is the foundation. Inaccurate coding produces inaccurate outcomes. Invest in regular training and competency.

03

Outcome measures make up ~70% of your QPC star score. Prioritize functional improvement and hospitalization reduction.

04

Patient experience (HHCAHPS) requires a culture of service. Communication, consistency, and complaint resolution drive scores up.

05

Monitor your data regularly. Use CASPER reports, Care Compare previews, Outside Tools, and EMR dashboards to act before ratings are published.

06

Use the 90-day action plan as your roadmap. Start with your worst-performing measures and build from there.



Thank You

Questions & Discussion

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Resources: CMS Care Compare | iQIES CASPER Reports | HHCAHPS Survey Website | CMS VBP Program