

Briggs' Study Targets Best Practices for Improving Quality and Reducing Unplanned Hospitalizations

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By Fazzi Associates, Inc.

With pay-for-performance on the horizon, the number one concern of every agency in the country is how to improve their quality – particularly the quality scores reflected in CMS's publicly reported Home Health Compare. At the center of their collective focus: *“How do we improve our quality scores on the only Home Health Compare measure not to improve – unplanned hospitalizations?”*

The industry response? The Briggs National Hospitalization Reduction Study, sponsored by the Briggs Corporation and co-sponsored by the National Association for Home Care & Hospice and Fazzi Associates. **Using a best practice research model developed by Fazzi, the project identified the top 10% of home care agencies in the United States. While the national average for unplanned hospitalizations was cemented at 28%, these 707 highly successful agencies were averaging 19% or lower.**

FACT: Based on national averages, home care patients experienced an estimated 1.16 million unplanned hospitalizations in 2004.

The year-long effort entailed surveying these agencies to find out what practices they intentionally used to reduce unplanned hospitalizations. Once the top practices were identified, a second phase focused on how practices were implemented within the agencies. While more than 50 practices were initially identified, in-depth analysis showed that improvement centered around 15 specific efforts.

The study will be completed in late October. Findings, including how the best practice strategies were implemented, will be shared with the field later in the year and throughout 2006.

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