



OFFICE OF RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND INFORMATION (ORDI)

Date: September 22, 2006

To: All Medicare Advantage Organizations

From: Timothy P. Love
Director

Subject: Medicare Health Outcomes Survey 2003-2005 Cohort 6 Performance
Measurement Electronic Data

On behalf of the entire Medicare Health Outcomes Survey (HOS) Team, I am pleased to provide official notification that the Medicare HOS *2003-2005 Cohort 6 Performance Measurement* beneficiary level data are available for those Plans who continue to participate in the Medicare Advantage (MA) program. The HOS measure is the first Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS[®])¹ outcomes measure for Medicare managed care.

The HOS *2003-2005 Cohort 6 Performance Measurement* Electronic Data File and accompanying documentation are the fifth release of beneficiary level HOS data to individual MA Plans. The HOS data are intended to support MA Plan quality improvement activities and initiatives. In addition, since CMS uses the data for MA Plan program oversight, the HHS Office of the General Counsel has advised that neither HIPAA nor the Privacy Act preclude the release of HOS data to participating MA Plans.

Due to the extremely sensitive nature of these data, CMS consulted with industry representatives to identify an efficient process for disseminating these data while ensuring their security and confidentiality. As a result, each participating Plan can obtain their data from the Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG) by contacting the HOS Information and Technical Support telephone line at (888) 880-0077 or via e-mail at hos@azqio.sdps.org. Please be prepared to confirm your organization's designated recipient of these data, in addition to your plan's address, return telephone number, and CMS contract number(s). The data are available for distribution to MA Plans at no cost, and will be provided on CD-ROM formatted as a fixed width (column delimited) ASCII file.

If you have any questions or require additional assistance, contact HSAG at the telephone number or e-mail address listed above. Should you have a policy or program concern related to the HOS, contact Chris Haffer, PhD, CMS HOS Program Director, at (410) 786-8764 or email at chris.haffer@cms.hhs.gov. For a general overview of the Medicare Health Outcomes Survey program, visit CMS' new HOS web address (www.cms.hhs.gov/hos). A full description of the HOS program that includes links to research data files, data user's guides, uses of the HOS data, and additional information can be found at www.hosonline.org on the web.

¹ HEDIS[®] is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance