



Media Statement

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VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATIONS OF AMERICA PARTNERS WITH MEDICARE TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF CARE

Statement of Carolyn Markey, President and CEO of VNAA

The Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) is pleased to have partnered with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the Home Health Quality Initiative. The VNAA represents approximately 415 non-profit, community-based Visiting Nurse Associations throughout the United States. VNA services include home health care, hospice, immunization, care coordination, public health and other services needed by their communities. Many VNAs have been serving their communities for over 100 years, long before Medicare and Medicaid. VNAs actually pioneered the development and delivery of the service that has come to be called home health care.

Because of our long tradition of community service and focus on quality care, we were pleased to collaborate with CMS throughout the development of the home health quality initiative. Many of our VNAs volunteered to assist CMS during the research and developmental stages of the standardized patient outcomes assessment tool, OASIS, that forms the basis for the quality measures being introduced to the public today. We have also worked side-by-side with CMS, suggesting ways to improve the assessment process and the quality measures themselves.

We believe this is an excellent beginning in measuring quality, and also believe there is much more work to be done. Home health is a rapidly evolving industry. Procedures and treatments once reserved to hospitals are now routinely being provided in patient's own homes. This lowers costs and often improves outcomes.

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Technology is also being applied in home care at an accelerating rate in an effort to better monitor and respond to changes in health status. Just as our nurses and therapists are challenging themselves to achieve higher levels of quality, we are challenging CMS to move to higher levels of quality measurement, assuring that each measure reflects the most accurate and risk-adjusted portrayal of the health care impact of home health services.

We are anxious to continue to work with CMS to refine the OASIS assessment process, reduce unnecessary paper work burden, define better measures of outcomes and help this process keep pace with a changing industry. In a budgetary environment in which Medicare home health payments have been cut and when some members of Congress are pressing to charge patients new fees for home health services, it will be challenging for VNAs to maintain the level of community service we always have provided, and that we wish to continue to provide. But VNAs will never compromise on the quality of care.

About the VNAA

The VNAA is the official national association for non-profit, community-based Visiting Nurse Agencies, who care for and treat approximately 4 million patients each year. The nation's network of 415+ Visiting Nurse Associations employ nearly 150,000 health care professionals, and share a non-profit mission to provide cost-effective and compassionate home health care to some of the nation's most vulnerable individuals – particularly the elderly and individuals with disabilities – regardless of their condition or ability to pay. The VNAA has a wide range of resources available on its award-winning website about home health care and things to ask about when considering home health care. By visiting www.vnaa.org consumers can locate a VNA in their community.

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[For advice on selecting an Agency click here](#)

[For more information on paying for home health care click here](#)

[For patient caregiver information click here](#)

[For answers to Frequently Asked Questions click here](#)