



## Alacare Home Health & Hospice

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### Summary of Project

Alacare Home Health Services is a large agency with multiple locations servicing an extensive geographic region in Alabama. Widely recognized for the size of their operation, Alacare is also known as a leader in the home health industry. Consistent with their goal of providing the highest quality of service, Alacare keeps a close eye on their performance compared to other organizations, while maintaining a focus on exceeding standards, or “not benchmarking to mediocrity.”

This philosophy was a guiding force when the Alacare Utilization Review Committee sought out opportunities to improve utilization practices in the organization. The committee chose to focus performance improvement efforts on decreasing the agency’s LUPA rate, even though it mirrored the national norm. The goal of improving effective utilization of clinical resources, while keeping the mission of meeting patient needs, and the standard of maintaining regulatory compliance in the forefront, were the organization’s top priorities.

### Project Description

Alacare’s Utilization Review Committee recruited a broad group of agency leaders, including Administrators, Educators, Clinical Supervisors, and a multi-disciplinary clinical staff to work on this project. In order to truly understand their current performance, and before diving in to make changes, the team needed to find a way to determine if performance levels varied between each of their multiple branch offices and also between different segments of their patient population.

Some of the bigger challenges in running a large organization are tracking, evaluating, and managing the differences in performance between different locations. Alacare was able to quickly identify variations in the rate of LUPA between different organizations by reviewing one single report—the OCS Corporate Compare Report, which lists all of the branch-level performance side-by-side, along with national and agency norms. This knowledge allowed them to focus their research and to identify effective techniques used in some branches that could be applied to other locations.

Similarly, the team reviewed drill-down benchmark reports to understand varying LUPA rates in subsets of their patient population. They used the Service Line drill-down option in OCS-BBI Reporter and the diagnosis-specific drill-down in OCS-BBI Elite. Putting the data from these reports together, they could

see that patients with CHF and mental health diagnoses were among those with the highest LUPA rates. Armed with this information, they targeted performance improvement efforts to address the real areas of need.

## Processes Defined and Implemented

- Identify performance focus
- Set standards
- Understand problem
  - ◆ Variations between locations
  - ◆ Differences between types of patients
- Target care research based on variances in performance
- Target improvement efforts
- Bi-monthly review of internal data
- Monthly communication of internal data to staff
- Quarterly review and communication of benchmark results

## OCS Products

- OCS-BBI Reporter
  - ◆ All reports, including Case Mix, Select Clinical Indicators, Quality Tracking, Utilization Summary, Executive Summary, Bubble Graph, Corporate Compare Reports
  - ◆ Service Line drill-down option
- OCS-BBI Elite

## Results

Alacare's focused investigation, research, and improvement efforts led to the development of patient care management practices that improved overall patient care and financial outcomes. Decreasing the LUPA rate resulted in an additional \$500,000 to Alacare's bottom line. The next step is to more closely align clinical outcomes with utilization patterns. They are well on their way to accomplishing this in their disease state management policies. This data will also be used to target the development of disease management programs.