

Data Source

To create the HomeCare Elite list of top Medicare-certified home health care agencies, OCS used publicly-available data, published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Quality of Care data and Quality Improvement data are from the Home Health Compare database, released in September of 2008, reflective of care provided April of 2007 through March of 2008. Financial information is from the 2007 Cost Report database. Where 2007 Cost Report data were not available, 2006 data, adjusted based on median performance change between 2006 and 2007, were applied.

Measures Included

There are three domains of performance included in the measurement process – Quality of Care, Quality Improvement, and Financial Performance.

Quality of Care evaluates an agency's performance in each of the 12 public-release measures available on Home Health Compare (HHC). Individual measures are weighted based on the proportion of patients impacted by the type of care reflected by the indicator. Agency performance is compared and indexed based on state norms.

Quality Improvement measures the change in an agency's HHC outcomes, comparing data for the 10 indicators released in September of 2007 to data on the same 10 indicators released in September 2008. When an agency did not have data in 2007, the median level of change was applied to the agency's score.

Financial Performance ranks agencies based on difference from a state average profit margin. Free standing agencies are ranked using overall profit margin; facility-based agencies are judged only on Medicare patient profit margins (due to a lack of overall profit information).

Each of these three domains is weighted in the compilation of the final score. Quality of Care comprised the bulk of the final score. Financial Performance was weighted only slightly more than Quality Improvement.

Agency Rankings

After an index is assigned to each agency for every domain of analysis, and points for level of care are assigned based on the agency's ranking in that domain, those rankings are weighted and combined to create the final score. The final score is used to assign overall agency rankings.

The HomeCare Elite, or top 25% of agencies, is identified from each of the 10 Medicare Regions, from each the facility-based and free standing categories. The full collection of agencies from each region is pulled into an alphabetical list to present the HomeCare Elite organizations to the industry.

From this full list, the 100 and 500 agencies with the highest overall score are identified and highlighted for additional recognition as the Top 100 and Top 500 Home Care agencies in the country.