



# amedisys

HOME HEALTH • HOSPICE • PERSONAL CARE

## CASE STUDY:

# NEW APPROACH TO HOME HEALTH CARE AT AMEDISYS PRODUCES HIGHER CMS STAR RATINGS

In early 2015, Amedisys forged a four-pronged strategy whose centerpiece was a commitment to achieve clinical distinction. By far the biggest priority was improving clinical quality at the home health care centers Amedisys operates.

That same year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) introduced a new system that publicly reports ratings of Medicare-certified home health agencies through its Home Health Compare website. Home Health Compare uses a Star rating between 1 and 5 to show consumers how a home health agency compares to other home health agencies on measurements of their performance. The Star ratings are based on 9 measures of quality that give a general overview of performance.

The CMS Home Health Compare website helps consumers, caregivers and families as well as physicians and hospitals to make informed decisions when choosing a home health provider.

Beginning in early 2016, Amedisys made thoughtful investments in implementing its clinical distinction strategy. Clinical education was revamped; its clinical department was reorganized in order to provide better, more timely support; regional vice presidents and area vice presidents of clinical operations were established and a clinical analytics director was hired. Its senior leaders and in-house resources were brought closer to its clinicians in the field. The Homecare Homebase software system was installed companywide, and leveraged quality reporting software from SHP to deliver data.

Amedisys is driving standardization in its protocols of care. Evidence-based best practices were released and required for patients at high risk for hospitalization – for example “front-

## CHALLENGE

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) introduced a new system that publicly reports ratings of Medicare-certified home health agencies through its Home Health Compare website - a Star rating between 1 and 5. Amedisys wanted to improve its average Star rating in this important measure of clinical quality.

## SOLUTION

- + Established, implemented clinical distinction strategies
- + Redesigned a clinical support structure
- + Equipped clinicians with necessary tools

## KEY INTERVENTIONS

- + Streamlined hierarchy
- + Evidence-based care protocols
- + Empowered clinicians

## RESULT

From May, 2016 to July, 2017, CMS Star ratings in Quality of Patient Care rose to an average of 4.13 Stars, above the industry average of 3.25 and 15% higher than a year earlier.

loading” visits, “tuck-in” calls, and three touch points within the first week of care. Identifying patients at the highest risk for readmission took on the highest priority. Clinicians meet more frequently to identify issues, review data and determine the appropriate staffing level. Clinical feedback is solicited promoting a collaborative spirit. Throughout, clinician levels of engagement are evaluated, and dramatically improved. A culture that empowers clinicians to spend more time in contact with patients than with paper was ultimately created.

Amedisys has now improved its Star ratings for seven straight quarters, most recently earning an average Star rating of 4.13 in Quality of Patient Care for the 329 home health centers it oversees in 34 states – this is above the industry average of 3.25 and 15% higher than a year earlier.

Better yet, 80% of its home health centers achieved a rating of 4 Stars or better, compared to thirty percent (30%) last year. Fifty-three centers are rated at 4.5 Stars, with five attaining the maximum 5 Stars. Every Amedisys home health care center is on track to attain a quality Star rating of 4 or higher by the end of 2017.

## 5 KEYS TO SUCCESS:

1. Placing a premium on patient care is non-negotiable.
2. Investments in clinical support should be organized close to the patient.
3. The more engaged the clinicians, and the lower the clinical turnover, the better the patient outcomes.
4. A fully collaborative approach companywide is essential.
5. The right technology infrastructure delivers the right data.



“Our care centers rank among the top in the nation for delivering quality patient care. This is a direct result of our commitment to clinical distinction and investing in our people to provide the highest quality of care for our patients.”

*Susan Sender,  
Chief Clinical Officer*