



Enhancing Homecare through Data: The Critical Role of IPRs in Quality Improvement

In the rapidly evolving landscape of healthcare, the emphasis on quality measurement and data-driven decision-making has never been more critical. Interim Performance Reports (IPRs) stand at the forefront of this evolution, offering a detailed lens through which homecare operations across the United States can evaluate and enhance their service quality. Despite their significant benefits, it has come to light that a substantial number of organizations have yet to harness the power of these reports.

Recent discussions, including insights from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Open Door Forums, reveal a concerning trend: a large number of qualified homecare organizations are not accessing their available IPRs. This lack of engagement with vital performance data is not just a missed opportunity, it represents a gap in the industry's overall move toward improvement and accountability. The exact percentage of organizations neglecting to use this resource remains unclear, but the implications are indisputable—without intervention, many are at risk of falling behind in the competitive and regulatory landscape of home healthcare.

The real-world benefits of quarterly IPR access and analysis are undeniable. In documented case studies, operations that proactively review their IPRs uncover actionable insights that lead to significant improvements in care quality and operational efficiency. These reports provide a unique opportunity for organizations to benchmark against peers, identify areas for improvement and strategize for future challenges, particularly the impending value-based purchasing (VBP) model in 2025.

A critical barrier to IPR adoption lies in on-going misconceptions about the relevance and utilization of star ratings compared to the data offered by IPRs. While star ratings serve a consumer-facing purpose, they often lag in reflecting the most current performance data and do not cater to the strategic needs of providers. Relying on star ratings alone is inadequate for strategic planning and quality improvement.

To leverage IPRs effectively, organizations are encouraged to integrate these strategies into their regular operational review cycles:

- Establishing dedicated teams or committees focused on data analysis and performance improvement;
- Utilizing IPR data for strategic planning, particularly in anticipation of VBP adjustments; and
- Engaging in continuous education on data interpretation and application to ensure findings are translated into actionable strategies.

Incorporating visuals such as charts, graphs and infographics can show how the timeliness, depth and strategic value of IPRs compare to star ratings.

Recognizing the value of IPRs is the first step towards leveraging this crucial resource for the betterment of care quality and operational success. It's time for organizations to embrace data-driven improvement, prepare for future challenges and ensure the highest standards of care for those who need it.

About The Author

Arlene Maxim is the Senior Vice President of Clinical Services for Axxess where she leads innovative change across the healthcare continuum. Arlene has developed and implemented multiple post-acute care programs, working closely with multiple hospitals, home care and hospice agencies, accountable care organizations, etc.

With more than 40 years of nursing experience, Arlene previously co-founded regional multimillion-dollar Medicare certified home health care companies, hospital-based home care and hospice companies and transitional care programs. Early in her nursing career she combined her clinical knowledge with her home care and hospice interests and began working as a consultant in the home care and hospice field in 1986.



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