



Center for Medicaid and State Operations  
Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group (DEHPG)

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**TO:** State Medicaid Directors  
State Directors for Agencies Administering the HCBS Waivers  
CMS Regional Administrators  
CMS Associate Regional Administrators  
CMS Regional Office HCBS Waiver Contacts  
HCBS Inventory Work Group

**CC:** Charlene Brown, CMSO Deputy Director

**FROM:** Glenn Stanton  
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Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group (DEHPG)

**SUBJ:** The Quality Framework for Home and Community-based Services (HCBS)

**DATE:** February 17, 2004

For the past eighteen (18) months, CMS has been engaged in a dialogue with stakeholders regarding quality in HCBS programs. This dialogue has yielded valuable insights and products that we want to share with you as a part of our continuous quality improvement initiative.

This is the third in a series of communications related to improving quality in home and community-based services. The most recent communications in October 2003 transmitted the HCBS Work Book, the Participant Experience Survey (PES) and Users' Guides.

In August 2002, CMS widely distributed the draft *HCBS Quality Framework*. As a result of comments from multiple stakeholders and through our collaboration with the National Association of State Medicaid Directors, the National Association of State Units on Aging and the National Association of State Developmental Disability Directors, CMS has improved the *Quality Framework*. The modifications emphasize the importance of building quality into the design of the HCBS program and change the term "domain" to "focus area." The Quality Framework is now being disseminated as a final document.

A set of "sub-domains" that provide specificity within each focus area were distributed with the original *Framework*. These have also served as a basis for our discussions with states. The sub-domains have been modified and are included here as a second document entitled "Quality Focus Areas," a working draft. As we gain more experience with the *Framework* and the focus areas, we will modify the specifics within the focus areas.

CMS will continue its on-going dialogue with all major stakeholders as we work toward improving quality in HCBS services. We will continue to provide technical assistance and additional Quality Tools that support states in their first-line responsibility for HCBS quality.

The **HCBS Quality Framework and Quality Tools** are available on the quality page of the CMSO web site, [www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/waivers/quality.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/waivers/quality.asp), in accessible formats for persons with visual impairments.

We welcome comments about the *Framework* and its sub-focus areas, which you can send to us via e-mail at [hcsquality@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:hcsquality@cms.hhs.gov).

We appreciate the valuable input provided by states, CMS Regional Offices, and state associations, and look forward to continuing the working relationship as we review and improve HCBS quality assurance and improvement strategies.

Attachment