

HOME CARE

**PULSE REPORT
2007**

Patient Perspectives on

American Health Care

PRESS GANEY[®]

Introduction

Dear Reader,

Change within the health care industry continues at an accelerated pace. 2006 brought many changes—from government regulations to new quality initiatives to changes in consumer expectations about their care. In a constantly changing environment, it is important to step back and look at the big picture to evaluate both progress and opportunities for health care providers.

Press Ganey is proud to present the definitive source on home care quality from the patient perspective—the 2007 *Home Care Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care*. This report highlights findings from more than 282,000 patients receiving care from 473 home health organizations and sixty home medical equipment providers throughout the nation. The collection of findings is part of a series of Press Ganey *Pulse Reports* and *Check-Up Reports* being released throughout 2007. These reports examine the status of health care quality across different care settings and from different perspectives.

Amazing things are accomplished in health care every day in the face of challenges and skepticism. This report explores the ongoing evolution of health care delivery. It identifies accomplishments warranting recognition and areas of care in need of more attention. By examining the state of health care through the eyes of the patients, physicians, and nurses who experience it, the doors open wide to the daily experience of health care. With a strong grasp of the existing state of health care quality, health care providers are equipped to push quality improvement to the next level.

Sincerely,



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President and CEO

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The 2007 *Home Care Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care* examines the experiences of more than 282,000 patients receiving care from 473 home health organizations and sixty home medical equipment providers throughout the nation between January 1 and December 31, 2006. The report provides national patient perspectives regarding the quality of home health care. Key findings of Press Ganey research include:

- Home health care organizations across the nation made steady improvement in patient satisfaction in 2006 after sporadic improvements over the past four years. This increase in patient satisfaction indicates home care providers are largely meeting the needs of their patients.
- The greatest source of patient dissatisfaction is not with the visit itself but dealing with the home care office on issues like changing nurses or aides and handling emergencies. Patients receiving home health services do not have a call button at their bedside to push when they need help. They need to know how to contact a home health agency representative when they are experiencing trouble.
- The length of time a patient needs to use home health care services may influence his or her overall satisfaction. Satisfaction with home care decreases significantly after ten months.
- The length of time a patient needs home medical equipment may influence his or her overall satisfaction. Satisfaction with home medical equipment services decreases considerably after twenty-one weeks.
- Medicare patients, frequently the most common user of home health services, reported the highest overall satisfaction with home health care services.
- Patients report the highest satisfaction with visits that occur between 8 and 10 AM. Home health care agencies seem to be responding to patient preferences by scheduling 60% of home visits before noon.

The *Press Ganey Home Care Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care* finds patients are largely satisfied with the care and service they receive from home health providers and home medical equipment agencies, but communication with the home care offices can be frustrating. Patients want the home care offices to respond to their questions and requests in a respectful and timely manner. Responding to concerns with compassion and sensitivity is essential to providing quality patient care. The bottom line is, if home health care providers listen to what patients are saying, they can offer better quality health care.

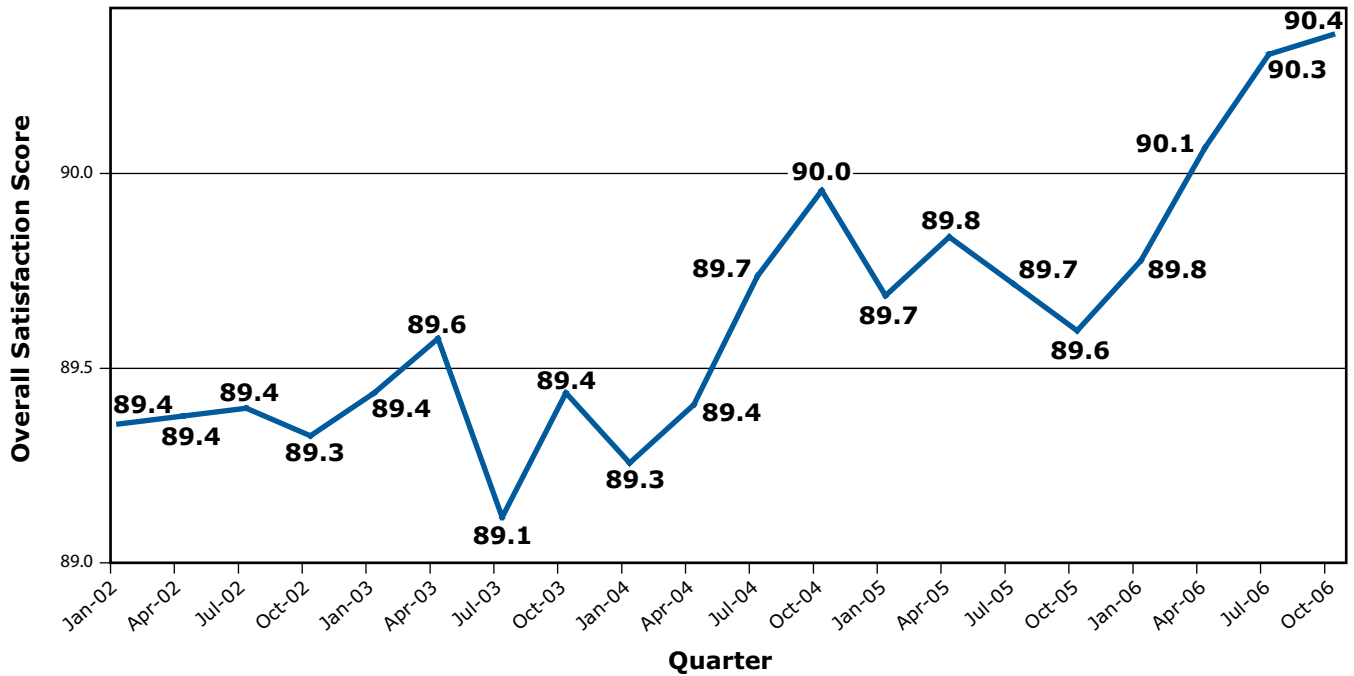
Section I

Home Health Care

Satisfaction with Home Health Care

Home health care organizations across the nation made steady improvement in patient satisfaction in 2006 after sporadic improvements over the past four years. This increase in patient satisfaction indicates home care providers are largely meeting the needs of their patients.

Trend in Home Health Care Satisfaction



Represents the experiences of patients cared for by home health organizations nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

Priorities for Home Health Care Organizations

The ability to respond quickly and effectively to patient requests is a challenge facing many home health care providers. Home health care providers must establish effective systems for patients to reach them following the nurse visit. The greatest source of patient dissatisfaction is not with the visit itself but dealing with the home care office. The following are the highest priorities for improvement, according to Press Ganey research. The National Priority Index combines information about home health care organizations' performance and the relative importance of each item to the respondents.*

National Home Health Care Priority Index

*Questions are related to the patient's rating of
"Likelihood of your recommending our home health services to others"*

Survey Item	Priority Rank
How well Home Care handled your request to change nurses or aides	1
How well Home Care handled emergencies	2
How well the office dealt with your problems and complaints	3
Staff's concern to keep your family informed about your treatment, condition or progress	4
How easy it was to get the visiting schedule changed	5

Represents the experiences of 187,817 patients cared for by 473 home health organizations nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

**The Priority Index combines information about home health care facilities' performance and the relative importance of each item to patients' overall satisfaction. Higher priority is given to those issues that are relatively important to patients and for which home health facilities had lower performance compared to other items on the national survey. In the case of a tie, greater weight is given to the item which is most important to patients' overall satisfaction. Items are listed in decreasing priority.*

“The greatest improvement opportunities for home health providers are home health office and process-related items. Patients are not complaining about the clinical staff. This research tells us that most home health providers would do well focusing improvement efforts on their current processes and office staff, rather than further training for the clinicians.”

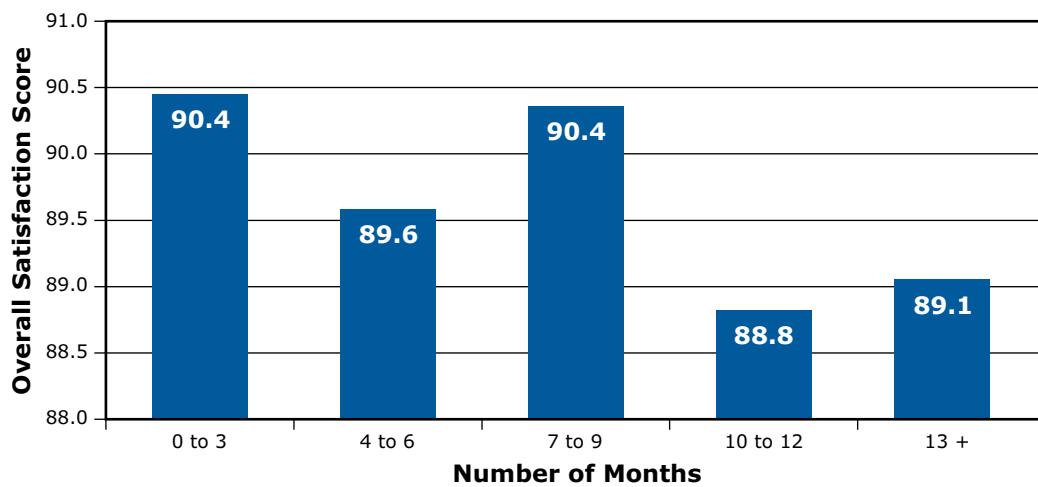
—Consultant, Press Ganey Associates

Satisfaction by Length of Time as Patient

The length of time a patient needs to use home health care services may influence his or her overall satisfaction.

- Patients who use the services 0–3 months or 7–9 months are equally satisfied.
- Patients who use services 4–6 months report lower satisfaction.
- Those who use home health services the longest are the least satisfied.

Home Health Care Patient Satisfaction by Length of Time Using Services

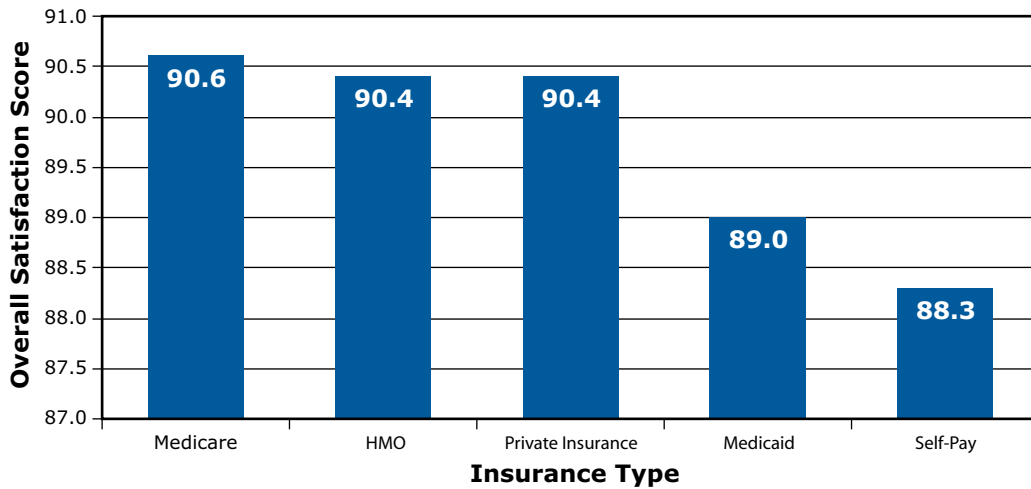


Represents the experiences of 187,817 patients cared for by 473 home health organizations nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

Payer's Impact on Home Care Satisfaction

How patients pay for their home health services also influences their satisfaction. Medicare patients, frequently the most common user of home health services, report the highest overall satisfaction. Those patients with HMOs or private insurance are similarly satisfied. Self-pay patients are the least satisfied with the care they received.

Home Health Care Patient Satisfaction by Type of Insurance

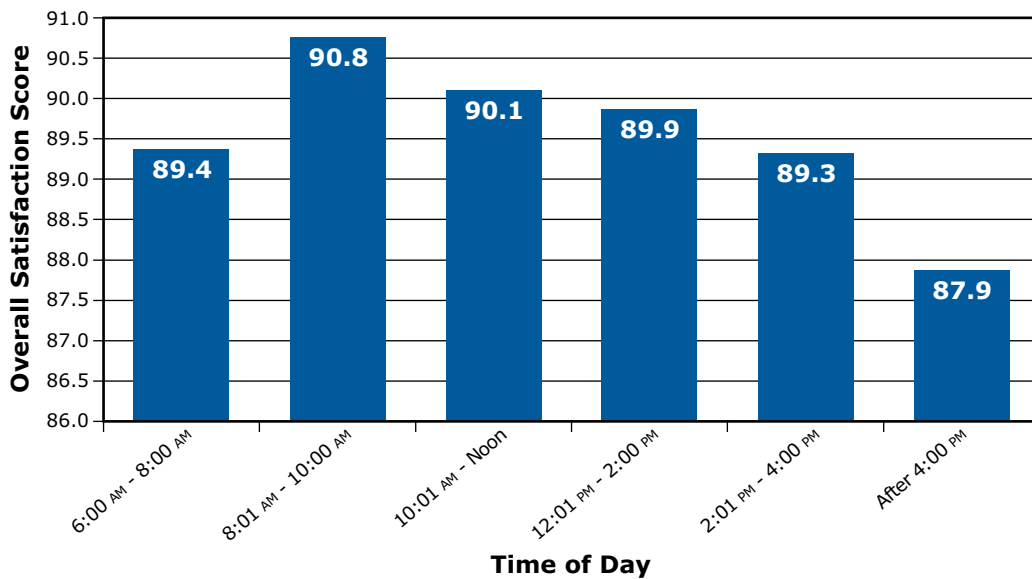


Represents the experiences of 187,817 patients cared for by 473 home health organizations nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

Satisfaction by Time of Visit

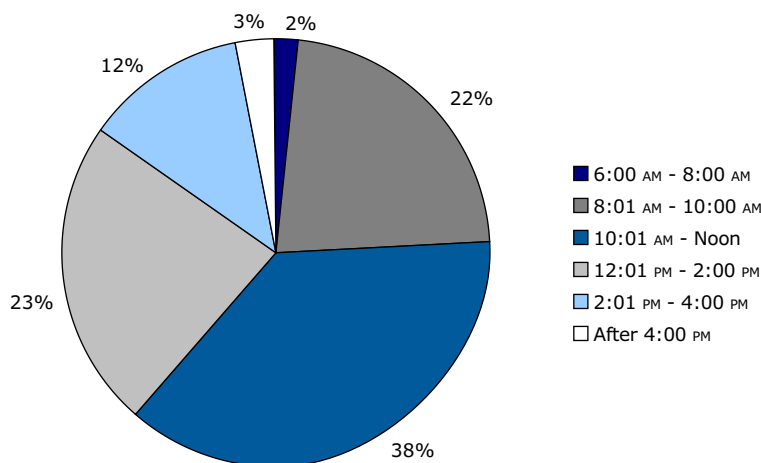
The time of day that the nurse visit takes place is related to the patient's overall satisfaction. Patients report the highest satisfaction with visits that occur between 8 and 10 AM. Home health care agencies seem to be responding to patient preferences by scheduling 60% of home visits before noon.

Satisfaction by Time of Nurse Visits



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Most Frequent Times of Nurse Visits



Represents the experiences of 187,817 patients cared for by 473 home health organizations nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

Case Study: Pekin Hospital Home Health

Pekin Hospital Home Health, established in 1960, is the first hospital-based home health program in the state of Illinois. With a staff of four field registered nurses (RNs), one aide, one office assistant/aide, and contracted therapy workers, this small staff works together to provide patients with excellent care and performs 5,000–6,000 annual home visits. Pekin Hospital Home Health provides a wide array of services. Skilled therapists are available for rehabilitation assistance. The home health team provides for the physical needs of patients and offers patient education for a number of chronic conditions.

In 2006 Press Ganey recognized Pekin Hospital as a Summit Award Winner for its leadership in home health care satisfaction. The organization has maintained its home health patient satisfaction above the 95th percentile since April 2003. Satisfaction scores are made widely available to the staff. Current performance is posted on bulletin boards and is included in newsletters. This reminds staff of the importance of customer service and recognizes those areas with excellent performance.

Senior leadership's commitment to service is a driving force behind all areas of improvement. Improvement initiatives began by reinforcing positive employee behaviors. Pekin Hospital believes that rewarding and recognizing employees is an important component to maintaining employee commitment to service excellence. Acknowledgements include thank-you notes from management to employees thanking them for excellent service.

Pekin Hospital Home Health is successful because it focuses on the needs of every patient. Each of the following initiatives is designed with the convenience of the patient in mind and requires coordination to make sure they occur for every patient. They include:

- business cards for the patient with home health provider contact information
- a meeting with a home health provider before the patient leaves the hospital
- an after-discharge follow-up call to the patient by the home health provider

To learn more about Pekin Hospital read their Summit Award narrative at http://www.pressganey.com/client_recognition/summit_awards/award.php?sa_id=20

Section II

Home Medical Equipment

Priorities for Home Medical Equipment Agencies

The greatest opportunity for improvement for home medical equipment agencies is to quickly and effectively respond to patient needs. Patients desire agencies to improve the way their complaints about services or equipment are managed. They also struggle with determining who to contact with their questions and concerns.

Questions are correlated to the patient's rating of "Likelihood of your Recommending this Home Medical Equipment Agency to others."*

National Home Medical Equipment Priority Index

Survey Item	Priority Rank
Agency handling of complaints about services or equipment	1
Explanation of how/whom to contact with questions	2
Therapist concern to contact you if he or she cannot make it or will be coming late	3
Responsiveness of personnel if you have billing concerns/questions	4
Ability to make deliveries when needed	5

Represents the experiences of 94,497 patients serviced by 60 agencies nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

**The Priority Index combines information about the performance of home medical equipment agencies and the relative importance of each survey item to patients' overall satisfaction. Higher priority is given to those issues that are relatively important to patients and for which home medical equipment agencies had lower performance compared to other items on the national survey. In the case of a tie, greater weight is given to the item which is most important to patients' overall satisfaction. Items are listed in decreasing priority.*

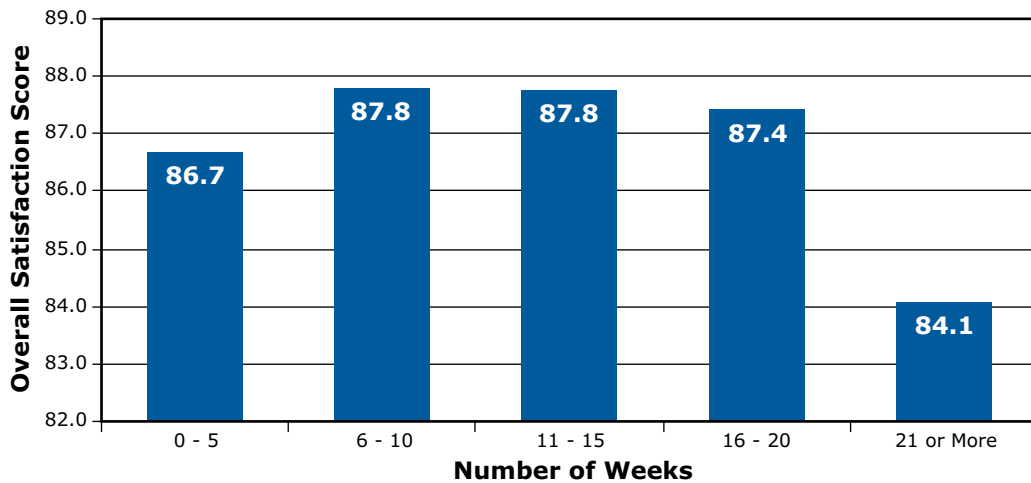
“A common strategy for home medical equipment companies looking to maintain successful businesses is to work closely with insurance providers. It is imperative that medical equipment companies deliver high quality service in order to continue receiving insurance referrals from their providers. At the same time, the level of quality offered by the medical equipment company will directly impact the patient's perception of the insurance provider and can influence his or her decision to stay with the provider.**”**

—Consultant, Press Ganey Associates

Satisfaction by How Long Equipment Is Needed

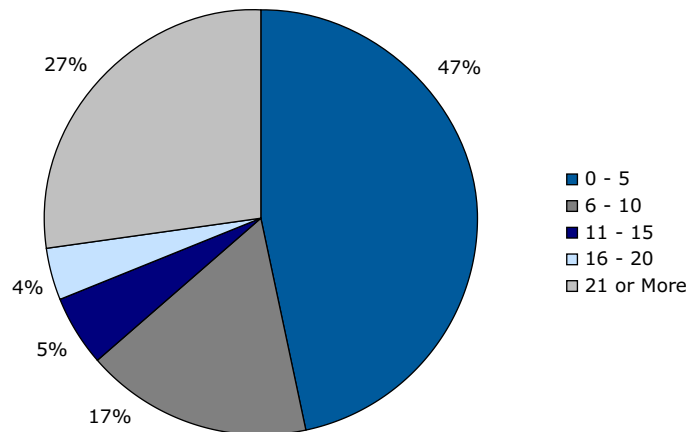
While some patients need home medical equipment for a few weeks, others need the services for many months. The longer the service time, the more opportunities a provider has to meet, exceed, or fail to meet patient expectations. Almost half of patients need home medical equipment for less than five weeks, but patients that use the equipment between six to fifteen weeks report the highest overall satisfaction. Satisfaction takes a big dip when the patient's circumstance requires that he or she needs equipment for more than 21 weeks.

Satisfaction by Number of Weeks Using the Equipment



Represents the experiences of 94,497 patients serviced by 60 agencies nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

Number of Weeks Patients Use Equipment



Represents the experiences of 94,497 patients treated at 60 agencies nationwide between January 1 and December 31, 2006

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About Press Ganey Associates, Inc.

For more than twenty years, Press Ganey has been committed to providing insightful information that allows our more than 7,000 health care client facilities to continuously improve their performance. Our foundation for success is built upon dedication to scientific integrity, relentless responsiveness to our clients' changing requirements, and an overall passion for helping our clients succeed. By pursuing and acting upon input from our clients, we are consistently able to develop and deliver the newest innovations.

We continue to succeed by exchanging knowledge with our clients, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge between our clients.

Among U.S. inpatient hospitals, roughly one-third currently contract with Press Ganey to measure patient satisfaction. With over 9.5 million surveys processed annually, Press Ganey has the most extensive database of patient, health care employee, and physician satisfaction data. Press Ganey's tools and services—measurement tools, consulting services, networking opportunities, and solutions for improvement—use patient, employee, and physician feedback to drive health care improvement initiatives.

All data and findings represent surveys returned by patients, physicians, and employees to Press Ganey clients.

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