

ALABAMA QUALITY ASSURANCE FOUNDATION

**GENERAL MEMORANDUM 96/99-12  
FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION**

**TO:** Administrators, Chiefs of Staff, Utilization Review/Quality Assurance Departments  
of Alabama Acute Care Hospitals

**FROM:** H. Terrell Lindsey  
President and Chief Executive Officer

**DATE:** May 8, 1998

**SUBJECT: 1996 and 1997 Acute Care Hospital Medicare Paid Claims Data Profiles**

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**I. Hospital Specific Data Profiles**

Enclosed are profiles containing data taken from Alabama acute care hospitals' Medicare paid claims. This data is provided to peer review organizations by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA). Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation (AQAF) receives the data from HCFA on a monthly basis for use in fulfilling our contract obligations in analysis and quality improvement projects. Data from specialty hospitals and PPS Exempt Units are not included in the profiles.

The profiles include a complete data set of paid claims information for calendar year 1996 and partial data for 1997 (approximately 95% complete). The lag time in processing the claims submitted by the hospital to the fiscal intermediary and HCFA accounts for the delay in AQAF receiving more current data each month for profiling.

Since individual hospital profiles are confidential, only your hospital-specific data and aggregate data for the State of Alabama are presented in the profiles. The data is arrayed by peer group and the State to give you the ability to make comparisons with your own hospital's data.

**II. Recommendations for Hospital Use of Data Profiles**

- A.** AQAF's analysis staff recommends hospitals review the profiled data to identify:
- trends over time; and
  - variances between peer groups and the State data.

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- B.** Comparison of average length of stay, readmission rates, mortality, etc., with peer groups and/or the State is recommended. The comparison may identify topics for further evaluation and possible utilization/quality improvement projects. Such projects may improve quality of care as well as improve cost efficiency in patient care.
  
- C.** Should you identify topics common or specific to your hospital which you would like to discuss or explore further with our analysis, statistical, or clinical staff, please call us at (205) 970-1600 or 1(800) 760-4550. AQAF staff who can assist you are Nadine A. Schiesz, R.N., extension 3104 and Tony Horn, M.S., extension 3231.

cc: AQAF Board of Directors; JBarnett, FMQAI; J.M.Horsley and J Frazer Rolen, AlaHA; JCottos, OIG-DHHS; LNorthcutt, BCBS