

Why Consumers Should Get Involved in the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign

What is Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes?

Advancing Excellence is the largest, voluntary group of its kind working together in every state to help make nursing homes better places to live, work and visit. Directed by 30 national organizations representing providers, professional groups, consumers (residents, families and friends), advocates, employees, and government agencies, the Campaign has organized a coalition of local stakeholders, called a LANE (Local Area Network of Excellence) to lead activities in each state.

Why Should Consumers Be Involved?

The Campaign provides an important opportunity for consumers and nursing homes to work together as partners to improve quality. On behalf of their loved ones who are receiving care, the ideas and suggestions of family members, friends, residents and others on how care can be improved are needed. You, as a concerned consumer, can help by encouraging nursing homes to participate, providing input on which goals a nursing home might select, and supporting its efforts to improve resident care and quality of life.

What are the Goals of the Advancing Excellence Campaign?

From the following eight goals, a nursing home must choose at least three goals to work on. Improvements in these areas will go a long way towards improving resident care and quality of life.

1. **Increasing Staff Retention:** Nursing homes will take steps necessary to encourage and maintain a stable workforce to care for residents.
2. **Increasing Use of Consistent Assignment:** Being regularly cared for by the same caregiver lets residents establish strong relationships with their caregivers, who can then see them as individuals. To maximize this important component of quality, nursing homes will employ "consistent assignment" of Certified Nurse Aides.
3. **Reducing Restraint Use:** Nursing home residents are independent to the best of their ability and will rarely be physically restrained.
4. **Decreasing Pressure Ulcers:** Nursing home residents will receive appropriate care to prevent and appropriately treat pressure ulcers when they develop.
5. **Reducing Pain:** Nursing home residents will receive appropriate care to prevent and minimize episodes of moderate or severe pain. Objectives for long stay and short stay are slightly different.
6. **Improving Advance Care Planning:** Following admission and prior to completing or updating the plan of care, all nursing home residents will have the opportunity to discuss the goals they have for their care or the kind of care they would want if they are no longer able to speak for themselves. This talk would be with an appropriate member of the healthcare team. The information should then be recorded in their medical record and used in the development of their plan of care.
7. **Increasing Resident/Family Satisfaction:** Nursing homes will ask residents and families about their experience with care and daily life in order to improve the quality of care provided in the future.

8. **Improving Staff Satisfaction:** Nursing homes will ask staff about their satisfaction with their work at least once a year and when they stop working at the home. This information will be used to improve working conditions so there is less turnover and better care provided.

What Can You Do?

If you or a loved one is now or might soon be residing in a nursing home:

- Join the Campaign! Go to the Campaign website, www.nhqualitycampaign.org, and click on the Consumer button for more information on Advancing Excellence. Become a part of the Campaign to show nursing homes how important quality is to you.
- Explore the Campaign website at www.nhqualitycampaign.org, which has a lot of information that may help you learn more how you as a consumer can work with the nursing home to improve the quality of resident care. In particular, you may want to review the new *Consumer Tip Sheet*, and *the Consumer Action Plan* with its many tools and resources.
- Review the *Consumer Fact Sheets* for each of the eight goals; these are on the Campaign website and will provide you with a better understanding of what participating nursing homes are working on
- If you have a particular nursing home in mind, check the list of participating nursing homes on the Campaign website, or ask the administrator or director of nursing (DON) if the nursing home has joined the Campaign.
- If the nursing home is participating, thank the administrator or director of nursing for their commitment! Then, find out what goals have been chosen, and discuss the steps will be taken toward meeting the goals the nursing home has selected.
- If your nursing home is not participating, encourage the administrator or corporate office to sign up.
- Show your commitment to excellence by going to the Advancing Excellence website and joining the Campaign. By signing up you will receive free updates on the Campaign and you will have access to information about the Campaign.
- Talk with other residents, family members and friends. Tell them about the Campaign and get them involved, too.
- Share the consumer information available on the Campaign website with the resident and family councils of the nursing home.
- Get in touch with your state LANE and become involved in its statewide activities. (You can find out who is leading your state LANE on the Campaign website.)
- Visit the Advancing Excellence website regularly for updated information and resources. If you have questions and the nursing home is not able to answer them, contact your local ombudsman (www.ltcombudsman.org).