



Helping nursing homes make a difference in the lives of residents & staff.

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. What is the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign?

The Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign represents an unprecedented combined effort of multiple organizations, both public and private, as well as individuals who are committed to continuous quality improvement in caring for frail, elderly, and disabled Americans in nursing homes nationwide.

### 2. How did the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign get started?

Leaders from long-term care provider organizations and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) began discussing the idea of a Campaign with measurable goals, and proposed it to the Administrator of CMS, Dr. Mark McClellan, in December of 2005. Dr. McClellan encouraged the group to further develop its proposal. With this support, a coalition of providers, caregivers, advocates, and government experts worked together to develop the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign based on key quality improvement goals. The Campaign originally began as a two-year initiative from September 2006 – August 2008. The Campaign was so successful that it is now in its second phase, running from January 2010 – December 2011.

### 3. What is different about this Campaign?

This Campaign was created by an unprecedented, broad-based coalition of organizations representing long-term care providers, caregivers, medical and quality improvement experts, government agencies, and consumers. This is the first time all of these groups with a stake in improving nursing home quality have come together in a national effort to coordinate combined resources with nationwide support, assistance, and commitment from national and local organizations. The coalition members are committed to providing Americans with an expectation of high quality care in nursing homes, nothing less.

### 4. Which organizations are participating in this Campaign? Is this a CMS Campaign, and how does this Campaign fit with existing quality initiatives already underway from the partners?

The organizations that founded the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign include:

- Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care
- American Association for Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA)
- American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators (AANAC)
- American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA)
- American Health Care Association (AHCA)
- American Medical Directors Association (AMDA)
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
- The Commonwealth Fund
- The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society
- National Association of Health Care Assistants (NAHCA)
- National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR)
- National Commission for Quality Long Term Care

Other organizations are invited to join the Campaign at varying levels of intensity.

As a collaborative effort, no single organization has complete ownership of the Campaign. CMS is very involved, working collaboratively, in this effort—providing technical expertise, staff, and other resources that will help launch and sustain the Campaign through 2011.

Achieving high quality care has been a priority for the nursing home community for many years, and many of the Campaign's founding organizations have existing quality initiatives. Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes builds on the work and goals of existing efforts such as the Nursing Home Quality Initiative, Quality First, the Campaign for Quality Care, and other important initiatives.

Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes provides an opportunity for providers to operationalize and measure the goals and mission of Quality First. The Campaign is not a substitute for Quality First or duplicative work for nursing homes already signed onto Quality First or committed to working with their State Quality Improvement Organization (QIO).

#### **5. How can organizations get involved in this Campaign?**

Organizations may participate in the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign in several ways. Many organizations are lending resources to launch this initiative. As Phase 2 of the Campaign gets underway, other organizations and businesses may contribute resources, however, the true "core" of this Campaign will be action at the local level. Therefore, both nursing homes and consumers will be encouraged to join the Campaign, and their commitment will be vital to its success.

#### **6. What is the aim of the Campaign?**

Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes seeks excellence in the quality of life and quality of care for the more than 1.5 million American nursing home residents by establishing and supporting an infrastructure of local QI networks, strengthening the workforce, and improving clinical and organization outcomes.

#### **7. Why is this Campaign necessary?**

Many nursing homes are already committed to providing quality care and many already do so. Some may not know how to focus their attention on quality improvement around specific care or quality of life concerns. This is an opportunity to help those homes that want to improve to do so and highlight the nursing home community's commitment to quality of care and quality of life. The Campaign will also raise the visibility of quality in nursing home care to increase public confidence.

#### **8. Will tools and technical assistance be available to help providers improve their performance and meet their targets? If so, where will providers get those tools?**

Yes. Several tools already have been developed to assist providers' ongoing quality improvement efforts, and the Campaign Website will provide access to these tools and more.

- Materials from the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) may be accessed at [www.qualitynet.org/medqic](http://www.qualitynet.org/medqic); moreover, the QIOs offer their expertise to providers primarily through phone calls and group meetings, and formal collaborative improvement projects. In some cases, QIOs will conduct site visits with providers.

- Providers' groups such as the American Health Care Association (AHCA), the American Association for Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA), and the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care have designed various tools to complement their Quality First initiative, which seeks to improve quality.
- The American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) has produced Clinical Practice Guidelines designed to assist providers to establish "Best Practices" in their nursing homes.
- Consumer groups such as the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR) offer tools through their Campaign for Quality Care.

The Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign's Technical Assistance Workgroup will continue to work to identify and develop additional tools and resources to help providers reach continuous quality improvement goals.

## 9. What are the goals of the Campaign, and how will the Campaign track nursing homes' progress in achieving the goals?

In the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Campaign, providers will voluntarily commit to track their progress on at least three of eight measurable quality goals. Three of the goals focus on clinical outcomes for those receiving care in nursing homes, and the other five goals address process-related organizational culture objectives. A provider must select at least three goals with at least one goal that is a clinical outcome measure and at least one goal that is process-related.

The clinical goals include reducing the use of physical restraints; reducing pressure ulcers among high risk residents; and reducing pain for both short stay and longer-term residents. Data for these important clinical measures are collected via the Minimum Data Set (MDS), which is a tool used by nursing homes to assess residents' health upon admission to and throughout their stay at a facility. Providers submit MDS data quarterly to CMS. CMS then publicly reports on these quality measures on the Nursing Home Compare tool on [www.medicare.gov/nhcompare/home.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/nhcompare/home.asp).

The process-oriented goals encourage providers to set individual targets for continuously improving care quality in nursing homes and assessing resident and family satisfaction, staff satisfaction, staff retention, consistent assignment of staff, and advanced care planning. While the Campaign will track these goals, too, the data for these five goals remain confidential and will not be publicly reported. Those nursing homes that voluntarily elect to share their goal selection will be made available to the State LANE for purposes of tailoring interventions and support. Providers not wishing to share their goals can monitor overall progress of the Campaign, which will track the goals and data in aggregate.

Regular Campaign updates showing progress in the aggregate will be posted on the Campaign Website at [www.nhqualityCampaign.org](http://www.nhqualityCampaign.org). In addition, the Campaign will provide a listing of the homes participating in the Campaign to allow consumers, providers and organizations (such as state and national associations) to track which homes have enrolled.

## 10. How can a nursing home join the Campaign?

Beginning on October 22, 2009, homes can visit the Campaign website at [www.nhqualityCampaign.org](http://www.nhqualityCampaign.org) to sign up for the Campaign. Nursing homes can also get information on the Campaign by contacting their Local Area Network for Excellence (LANE). A listing of the LANEs is published on [www.nhqualityCampaign.org](http://www.nhqualityCampaign.org). Nursing homes can select and modify goals through the recruitment phase until January 31, 2010. After that time period, goal selection will be locked in. Nursing homes can

join after the January 31, 2010 timeframe.

**11. What types of quality issues should residents and their families care about?**

There should be a public expectation of quality in nursing homes. Older adults should seek aging services organizations that will provide quality of care and quality of life to meet their particular needs. Older adults and their loved ones should review information about nursing homes, talk with health care and long-term care professionals, ask others who have experience with nursing homes, etc. Consumers should also ask providers about their quality improvement initiatives, including this nursing home quality Campaign, Quality First, accreditation, etc. After selecting a nursing home, family and friends should stay involved in the care of their loved one.

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding LANEs

- 1. In states where a troubled relationship exists between the LANE convener and the nursing homes, can the nursing homes organize the Campaign separately?**

No, there can be only one Advancing Excellence LANE (Local Area Network for Excellence) per state. The LANEs function as the state champion of the national Campaign. The expectation is that all key LTC stakeholder groups in a state will join together to form the LANE in their state. All LANE members are equal and are expected to bring their full commitment to supporting the Campaign. One or two of these will also need to serve as the Lane Convener or Co-Convener. The Convener serves as a point of contact in the state for anyone that wants information on the Campaign.

The Advancing Excellence website ([www.nhqualityCampaign.org](http://www.nhqualityCampaign.org)) carries more detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of a LANE and expectations relative to the Campaign. There is also a National workgroup that supports LANEs across the country.

- 2. Are the goals to be selected by the state LANE or individual nursing homes?**

Only individual nursing homes can sign up to participate in the Campaign. It is the decision of each nursing home representative to select the three, or more goals, their staff will commit to working on. In some states the goals selected by individual nursing homes are those that have been a focus for the state in Phase 1 of the Campaign or even prior to the launch of Advancing Excellence.

- 3. A fundamental concern is that those outside of the nursing home are the ultimate judge of the how well that nursing home is meeting targets. There is some concern that survey irregularity hinders the ability of a nursing home to meet targets.**

We understand your concerns and it is important to raise these for clarification. The Campaign is fully supported by CMS but is independent of the survey and certification process. This position is described in the September 11, 2006 letter to nursing home administrators from Thomas Hamilton, Director, of CMS's survey and certification group.

[http://www.nhqualityCampaign.org/files/NHQC0107\\_LOS\\_CMSthomasHamilton.pdf](http://www.nhqualityCampaign.org/files/NHQC0107_LOS_CMSthomasHamilton.pdf)

- 4. The original Campaign was slated to only exist for 2 years, many states were concerned that data collected from the Campaign would be used for a mandatory program at the end of that time. Will this occur for Phase 2?**

There are no data or other linkages between Advancing Excellence and mandatory government programs. The Steering Committee is hopeful that the experience with Advancing Excellence will contribute sustainable, valuable knowledge to quality improvement in LTC.

- 5. Can the data be used in a punitive way? Will there be regulatory or civil penalties from not meeting targets?**

In his letter, Thomas Hamilton, states that "participation in the Campaign will have no impact on State survey and certification activities."

- 6. Is there a public relations penalty (advertising those nursing homes NOT participating)? The group raising this concern stated that if those nursing homes which chose not to participate were widely publicized, those facilities might face survey 'punishment.'**

Advancing Excellence is about improving quality and strengthening relationships. The Steering Committee encourages LANEs to educate the public about the program and to involve consumers and providers. Individual providers will want to educate and involve their residents and family members.

**7. If goals are not met is the nursing home monitored more closely?**

There is no monitoring function for individual facilities in the Advancing Excellence Campaign.

**8. Has there been any communication from CMS to suggest that this could become part of a larger pay-for-performance system?**

No

**9. What groups have access to the data being collected -- CMS, trial attorneys, the general public? Can anyone request access to the data?**

Data for the clinical quality goals are collected via the Minimum Data Set (MDS). CMS publicly reports these quality measures on the Nursing Home Compare Website. The data for the organizational improvement goals will be collected by the Campaign and will remain confidential and will not be publicly reported unless the provider elects to have the Campaign publicize their data for these goals. Data on the organizational improvement goals will not be shared with CMS, except in the aggregate. Regular Campaign updates showing progress in the aggregate will be posted on the Campaign website. In addition, the Campaign will provide a listing of the homes participating in the Campaign.

**10. Who will communicate with the nursing homes as a first contact?**

For most providers, their first point of contact will be their state LANE, state associations, and perhaps their state quality improvement organization (QIO). This will come in the form of education programs to encourage participation. Once a provider has signed-on to participate, their name is sent to the LANE Convener in the state. Many LANEs then send out a welcome packet of materials. All participants are encouraged to check the Advancing Excellence website periodically for news and information.

**11. Few multi-facility nursing home owners/organizations have been involved in the process. Are there any plans to get nursing home owners to 'buy in' to the Campaign before launching it to individual members?**

At the national level, several organizations of nursing home providers are actively involved in the Campaign. They are among the original founders and also serve on the current steering committee. At the state level, the composition of the LANE coalition should mirror a similar level of provider representation.

Members of the national Advancing Excellence Steering Committee are:

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care
- American Academy of Nursing -- Expert Panel on Aging
- American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA)
- American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators (AANAC)
- American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA)

- American Health Care Association (AHCA)
- American Medical Directors Association (AMDA)
- Association of Health Facility Survey Agencies (AHFSA)
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and its contractors, the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs)
- Foundation of the National Association of Boards of Examiners of Long Term Care Administrators
- National Association of Directors of Nursing Administration in Long Term Care (NADONA/LTC)
- National Association of Health Care Assistants (NAHCA)
- National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR)
- National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care
- National Conference of Gerontological Nurse Practitioners (NCGNP)
- National Gerontological Nursing Association (NGNA)
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
- The Commonwealth Fund
- The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society
- The John A. Hartford Foundation Institute for Geriatric Nursing