



## **FAST FACTS: Resident and Family Satisfaction**

Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes is a national campaign to improve the quality of care and life for the country's 1.5 million people receiving care in nursing homes. Nursing homes, their staff and consumers can join in this effort by working on the campaign goals, designed to improve quality. This consumer fact sheet explains the link between resident and family satisfaction and the quality of care at a nursing home.

### **Why assess resident and family satisfaction?**

- A satisfaction survey is a formal set of questions about the care and services one gets in a nursing home.
- Assessing resident satisfaction is the first step in making changes or improvements in the quality of the care.
- This allows residents the chance to report their experience with care and daily life in the nursing home. The residents rate their satisfaction with the staff and the nursing home. Even many residents with memory loss or dementia can answer basic questions about their care well into the disease.
- Residents will report on areas that are important to them (for example, staff treating them with courtesy and respect) so homes know where improvements need to be made.
- Some nursing homes may choose to survey family members of residents for more information. Surveying family members is very important for residents who cannot respond independently (for example, residents with advanced dementia). The family also can often add information to the resident's viewpoint. Research shows that family and residents' views often differ.
- It is important to keep the focus on each resident and how to improve daily life.

### **What is considered satisfaction survey excellence?**

- The survey should be tested so most residents understand questions the same way.
- The survey should be kept anonymous. Responses should be kept confidential.
- There are several good ways to conduct a survey (for example, face-to-face, mail, or phone).
- The survey method should be adapted to the residents' different abilities to respond to the survey (e.g., blind, deaf).
- Residents with dementia may be able to complete a survey that is given by an interviewer face-to-face. But, they may not be able to complete a mail survey or even a phone survey.
- The survey results should state how many people responded to the survey out of all persons surveyed. The more people who answer the survey, the better the results.
- Survey results from residents should be presented separately from family results.
- The home should conduct the survey on a regular basis (at least annually).

*Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes is a national campaign to improve the quality of care and life for the country's 1.5 million people receiving care in nursing homes. Find out if your nursing home is part of the Advancing Excellence Campaign. To sign up or get more information, go to [www.nhqualitycampaign.org](http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org).*

## **What do satisfaction survey results mean to residents?**

- A high overall satisfaction rating may be a mark of excellence.
- High ratings on items or groups of items important to the resident (for example, being treated with courtesy and respect) are also good indicators of high quality care.
- Survey results showing a high percentage of resident or family willingness to recommend the home to others may be an additional mark of excellence.

## **How do nursing homes use satisfaction survey results?**

The nursing home should be able to explain how and when they will use the satisfaction survey results to make improvements. Consumers can ask these or other questions:

- How do they decide which results to act on?
- How do they set priorities?
- How do they set targets or goals for improvement changes?
- What improvements were made as a result of the survey?

## **What are some questions consumers should ask related to this goal?**

- Does the home conduct a survey of residents and/or family members? If a home is not currently doing a survey, ask if and when they plan to conduct one.
- Ask for a copy of the survey and the results.
- Ask how are surveys conducted (for example, by mail or in-person)?
- Ask who conducts the survey?
- Are the surveys conducted in a way that no one knows who answered the survey?
- Do survey results show a high level of satisfaction overall and in important areas?
- What changes has the nursing home made in response to survey results?
- Have the changes improved the quality of care or daily life of residents? How so?
- Does the state require all nursing homes to do a standard satisfaction survey?
- If yes, ask how this nursing home compares with other nursing homes in the state, area or region?
- If no, do other nursing homes use the same or similar satisfaction surveys to be able to compare the results with this nursing home?