

Increasing Use of Consistent Assignment

What is consistent assignment and why is it important?

Consistent assignment means a resident receives care from the same nursing assistants 85% of the time. Consistent assignment allows staff to develop closer relationships with residents in their care and with co-workers. Advancing Excellence chose this goal because consistent assignment results in the following benefits:

- Residents receive better care because staff are more knowledgeable about their needs and preferences.
- Residents feel more secure knowing that they will receive care from someone who they know.
- Staff see how their skill, experience and knowledge of the residents makes a difference in residents' lives.
- Staff are better able to implement care plans and are more likely to notice changes in residents' health, which can prevent larger health problems.
- Work becomes easier because staff are more accustomed to the residents' schedule, needs and wishes.

Consistent assignment provides a strong foundation for resident-centered care because it fosters the strong development of relationships, which is central to quality care.

The Advancing Excellence Campaign believes that "Being regularly cared for by the same caregiver is essential to quality of care and quality of life. To maximize quality, as well as resident and staff relationships, the majority of nursing homes will employ consistent assignment of CNAs."

How can staff help implement consistent assignment?

- Work with your nursing home's leadership in developing an educational program on the benefits of consistent assignment.
- Participate in meetings with other staff about consistent assignment.
- Collaborate with your nursing home's leadership to develop a process that will ensure that nursing assistants have input when assignments are given. The goal is to have everyone feel that their assignment is fair.
- Meet regularly to discuss how consistent assignment is working, including reviewing assignments to ensure that relationships with the residents are going well.
- Talk to leadership if you have a suggestion that you think might work better.



Consistent Assignment Resources

Campaign Resources:

- Consistent Assignment - The Practice and the Experience
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- Video - Consistent assignment: Where Do You Start and How Do You Do It!
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- "Implementing Change in Long-Term Care"
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- "Campaign Goals and Objectives"
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- "Top 10 Ideas to Involve All Staff in Advancing Excellence"
<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>

Best Practice Resources:

- A Keystone for Excellence: *Implementing consistent assignment provides a strong foundation for achieving the goals of the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes program.*
<http://www.providermagazine.com/pdf/2007/caregiving-07-2007.pdf>
- A Case for Consistent Assignment: *When caregivers get to know their patients more intimately, it opens the way for improved quality and a reduction in staff turnover.*
<http://www.providermagazine.com/pdf/caregiving-06-2006.pdf>
- Change Ideas for Consistent Assignment
<http://www.qsource.org/NHQI/Consistent%20Assignment.pdf>

Lessons Learned Resources:

- Nursing Home Adopts Consistent Caregiver Assignments
<http://www.internetifmc.com/downloads/NHQI/Wyndcrest%20Adopts%20Consistent%20Assignment.pdf>

Links to Relevant Organizations:

- National Association of Health Care Assistants
<http://www.nahcacaes.org>
- National Network of Career Nursing Assistants
<http://www.cna-network.org>
- Nursing Assistant Resources On The Web
<http://nursingassistants.net>
- National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center
<http://www.ltombudsman.org/>
- American Association for Homes and Services for the Aged
<http://www.aahsa.org/>
- American Health Care Association
<http://www.ahcancal.org/>
- Pioneer Network
<http://www.pioneernetwork.net>