

Questions and Answers: Implementation Guides

Q: How do we use the Implementation Guides for each goal?

*A: Start with the *Approach to Implementation*, as it provides basic performance improvement approaches, which have been identified in the literature over several decades. Each Implementation Guide starts with the *Approach to Implementation*, and then outlines other components that detail the process steps for approaching that particular goal.*

The *Approach to Implementation* covers key phases, as follows:

1. Recognition / Assessment

This phase includes identifying a goal, identifying recommended approaches to the topic or situation, carefully assessing a nursing home's current approaches, and comparing current to desirable approaches.

2. Cause Identification

This phase involves investigating causes and contributing factors related to current areas of care, service, or operations that need improvement.

3. Management

This phase (which refers to managing or addressing the situation, based on the information gathered in Phases 1 and 2, above), involves implementing measures to try to reinforce or improve the underlying processes, practices, and performance that ultimately permit a goal to be attained.

This is done through a combination of closely following the appropriate processes (as outlined in the *Process Frameworks* for each goal) and matching current approaches to desirable or optimal ones (i.e. "best practices").

4. Monitoring

This phase involves checking for consistent implementation of desirable approaches, rechecking processes and results, and adjusting approaches as needed to eventually improve results as much as possible.

Other components of the Implementation Guides for each goal:

The *Approach to Implementation* indicates where each of the other components, listed below, are likely to apply.

1. Flow Diagram

The flow diagrams are a picture of the steps involved in approaching the topic, condition, or situation related to the goal.

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2. Process Framework

The process frameworks give the details of the steps outlined in the *Flow Diagrams*. They include the steps, key expectations for action at those steps, and the rationale for those expectations.

3. Process Review Tool

The process review tools reflect the key steps identified in the *Process Frameworks* for each goal. They can be used to identify current approaches, to implement or refine desired approaches, and to help monitor practice and performance over time.

4. Resources

Each package has a list of resources, which provide references and tools that address details regarding the steps for each goal. For example, clinical practice guidelines listed for Goals 3 and 4 provide details for managing pain at the key steps identified in the *Process Framework* for those two goals (the processes are identical for both pain goals, although some details may vary at some of the steps).

Q: What does it mean to use "process frameworks" as part of Campaign participation?

A: The process frameworks help provide a systematic approach for all goals. Once used successfully for any goal, processes can be easily replicated for all goals. A common approach can improve efficiency and improve understanding of the key principles of improving quality, thus facilitating subsequent improvement activities. A participating nursing home can apply additional existing process frameworks to other aspects of care and organizational performance, or it can develop its own, based on the templates and examples.

A participating nursing home is free to select and tailor approaches, and use diverse references and resources to try to optimize specific steps. However, the end result should be consistent with the process framework for that goal, because those frameworks offer universally relevant steps. For example, regardless of what references and resources are selected to help it address pressure ulcers or improve staff satisfaction, the nursing home's approaches should include all of the steps outlined in the pressure ulcer or staff satisfaction process frameworks, respectively. Doing so, a nursing home is more likely to attain optimal improvement that can be sustained over time.

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Q: How will these process frameworks help Campaign participants?

A: The process frameworks were developed to help participating nursing homes in a number of ways:

The process frameworks are broad roadmaps to successful Campaign participation. They provide a concrete way to turn enthusiasm and good intentions related to improving care and nursing home operations into actual processes and practices that all nursing homes can use in their everyday programs and activities.

The approach to implementation and process frameworks have been developed specifically to help participating nursing homes identify how a single efficient, widely acceptable and applicable approach can help them attain several desired outcomes, including:

- a. High quality care that respects and responds to individual values, wishes and preferences; increases the likelihood of achievable clinical outcomes, and is consistent with current professional, evidence-based knowledge;
- b. Positive impact on financial results;
- c. Reduction of risk and legal liability; and
- d. Improved chances for regulatory compliance.

Campaign participation gives a nursing home the chance to see if its approaches to various clinical and operational issues are consistent with current desirable processes and evidence-based practices.

The process framework concept is flexible and universal enough that comparable frameworks can be developed and used for any other setting, situation or goal, either for this Campaign or in the future.

Process frameworks are not a “cure-all” nor are they the entire means to improving care and services in participating nursing homes. However, they are an essential component of such improvement.

Consistent process is needed to be able to compare outcomes within a single nursing home, across settings, and over time.

These process frameworks, and the Campaign, represent a more collaborative approach to care and services, across the spectrum of interests (consumers, regulatory agencies, providers, etc.). They provide a common set of information and expectations for everyone,

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which is ultimately centered on those who receive care. Thus, they facilitate “person-centered care,” which is one of the key attributes of quality as identified by the Institute of Medicine.

Any group, organization, or association that intends to guide participating nursing homes should use the process frameworks as part of their guidance, and help participating nursing homes identify how they can improve their outcomes by improving related processes.

Q: Are the process frameworks more than just an additional burden for a nursing home?

A: The process frameworks are simply a standardized way to look at familiar concepts and approaches, such as evidence-based practice, problem solving methodology, performance improvement approaches, and the “plan/do/study/act” (PDSA) approach.

Many participants will find that they are already doing some or many of the steps optimally, in which case they can continue the same course. But many will also find areas where they can fine-tune their processes. And, still others may identify that they are only doing some of the essential steps, and can thus improve their results by addressing missing steps. Reviewing the process frameworks helps to confirm that nursing homes are on the right track.

A key principle of performance improvement is to be open to reevaluating current processes and practices, and not just to assume that they are already optimal without validating them.

Q: How do we know that the process frameworks are helpful?

A: The process frameworks are based on existing evidence about the value of a systematic approach to both care and operational issues. Studies have confirmed the value of systematic processes and protocols in achieving desired goals.

The process framework approach has already been utilized successfully as part of several statewide initiatives, as a way for consumers, providers, practitioners, and surveyors to share a similar understanding of expectations and responsibilities associated with clinical and operational processes.

In addition, newly revised surveyor guidance from CMS on key topics such as pressure ulcers, pain management, medications, and Quality Improvement is embracing these processes, and is compatible with these frameworks. Thus, utilizing the process framework approach should also enhance regulatory compliance, even though survey compliance is not a primary focus of the Campaign.