

# Advancing Excellence

in America's Nursing Homes



## The Campaign Advance

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### More AE Participants are Reporting Consistent Assignment

At the beginning of Phase two of the Advancing Excellence campaign, leaders reprioritized campaign goals in order to focus on reducing staff turnover and improving consistent assignment - measures that help ensure the highest quality of care for residents. Recently the campaign published a new tool to help nursing homes report consistent assignment. Participating homes have found it useful to set consistent assignment as a campaign goal.

Ken Levering, Administrator at Delaware Court Healthcare Center, which has 100 beds, says his nursing home has been participating in the Advancing Excellence campaign since the beginning, and has been focusing staff attention on consistent assignment for nearly ten years.

"We've been practicing consistent assignment for so long that it's part of our process now," says Levering. "We would be hard pressed to move away from it. The campaign has been useful because it allows us to set goals, which we've found valuable."

Levering says his Director of Nursing found it helpful to use the campaign's consistent assignment tool, which is posted on the Web site. "We used the campaign tool, and it was helpful in calculating the data," he says.

For Delaware Court, having staff support for consistent assignment and its benefits makes campaign reporting simpler. "Once you get [staff buy-in] then you are simply self-reporting what you are doing. To us, it just makes sense as a policy."

Nolan Hoffer, Executive Director of Boise Health & Rehabilitation Center, in Boise, Idaho, which is licensed for 111 beds, agrees that staff and leadership support for consistent assignment is key to setting the goal. "Unless you truly believe in the goal and the purpose behind it, you can't effectively drive it. If you

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For 3 years we have worked to find the perfect message to describe the Campaign.

***Making Nursing Homes a Better Place to Live, Work and Visit!***

This says it all for our residents, staff, and consumers.

think it's going to benefit your patients or residents, then the chances are it's going to happen," advises Hoffer.

Hoffer's nursing home is part of Kindred health systems, which sets consistent assignment as a corporate goal. "It was encouraged by the corporation that we aim to improve consistent assignment. That worked fine because we are trying to constantly do better at that."

Hoffer adds that since Boise Health & Rehabilitation Center has been tracking consistent assignment, their percentages have improved. He says goal setting has played a factor. "It sets it as part of our culture; that consistent assignment is an important factor of what we do."

## Advancing Excellence Update Phase 2 Numbers & Goals

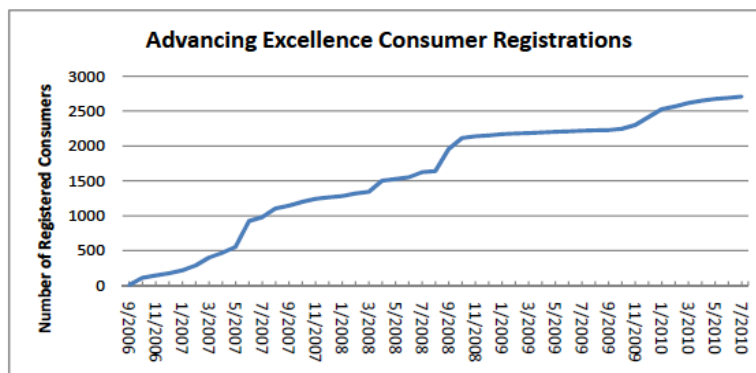
There are now over 6,600 nursing homes participating in Phase 2 of the campaign, with 4,724 Charter members and over 1,400 new participants. There are also over 2,700 consumers and over 1,200 nursing home staff registered as supporters of the campaign. Four states have already reached 100% nursing home recruitment including Arkansas, Georgia, South Dakota, and Rhode Island. Several other states are very close!

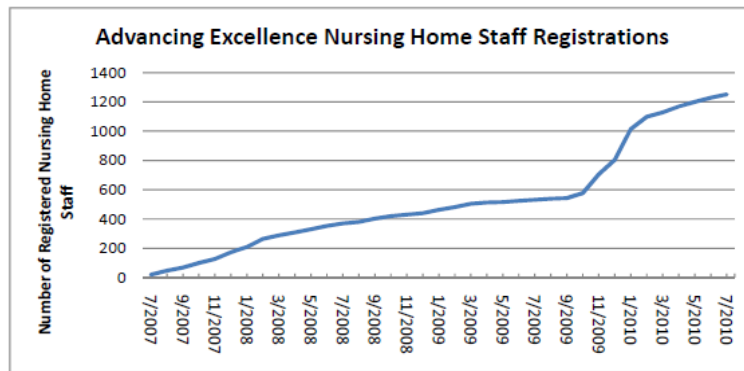
Of the nursing homes participating in Phase 2, the top three goals being chosen as focus areas include:

- Goal 5 -Pain Prevention (including 5A- long stay and 5B- short stay)
- Goal 4 - Prevention & Treatment of Pressure Ulcers
- Goal 7 - Resident/ Family Satisfaction

The campaign Web site has now been updated with national, state, and nursing home-specific data from Quarter 1, 2010, so nursing homes can log in and see their data trends for the clinical goals. Targets can also be updated based on any improvements you've already made!

*Consumer & Nursing Home Staff participation continues to increase!* The graphs below show how these registration numbers continue to move in an upward trend. The campaign is excited to have so many individuals supporting the campaign nationally. There are a variety of excellent resources on the campaign Web site tailored to [consumers](#) and [staff](#)- be sure to check them out!





## Data Entry Opportunities for Organizational Goals

Don't forget to enter your data for Goal 1 (Staff Turnover), Goal 2 (Consistent Assignment), Goal 7 (Resident & Family Satisfaction) and Goal 8 (Staff Satisfaction) on the Web site! Calculation tools and data entry are now available for these goals.

There is also a WebEx training opportunity that you can download from the Web site to help you understand the data collection tools and how to enter the data for Goals 1 and 2 on the Web site. Click here to access these great [trainings](#). Then, [log in](#) to your nursing home's profile to enter your data for these important goals each month.

Data entry for Goal 6 - Advance Care Planning will be available soon!

### LANEs

#### Advancing Excellence Performance Awards for LANEs

In August 2010, the Campaign launched a special program to advance LANE Performance! LANEs across the country were asked to develop proposals for best practices that will contribute towards achievement of Campaign goals. So far, 15 states have either submitted best practice proposals to the Campaign or expressed interest in the program! LANE goals include increased data entry for the organizational goals (decreased staff turnover and increased use of consistent assignment) and decreased rates of pressure ulcers. The Campaign will award a \$1000 stipend to each LANE that successfully reaches its goal. For information, contact Tammy Rolfe at [trolge@aahsa.org](mailto:trolge@aahsa.org).

### Consistent Assignment

#### Benefits of Consistent Assignment

Advancing Excellence Chair, Mary Jane Koren wrote about consistent assignment in a recent op ed piece in Modern Health Care.

Nursing home residents always rate relationships with caregivers as extremely important to them. Therefore, nursing homes that adopt consistent assignments often gain a competitive edge in a tough market - one that's filled with other options.

Consumers today have choices when they need long term care. Many go to assisted living facilities or will comparison shop before they pick a nursing facility. CMS collects data on nursing home outcome measures, and increasingly consumers will check the publicly available ratings before choosing a facility.

Nursing homes that begin using consistent assignment might have to change the way they manage staffers but, after the initial start-up, they often find the new way is a better way, often catching medical problems in the early, treatable stages.

For example, a nurse who's assigned to Mrs. Jones might notice a slightly pink patch of skin, the first sign of a developing bedsore. That nurse could immediately begin treatment to prevent the skin from breaking down. If that proactive approach works, the nursing home can end up with a better bottom line because once a bedsore forms and becomes advanced, it can cost \$19,000 to treat. In many cases, not all of that expense can be passed on, and the extra cost ends up hurting the facility's bottom line.

Nursing homes that rely on short-term employees or temporary staffing might not invest in competitive salaries, benefits, and other factors that keep staff satisfied and on the job for the long run. The turnover rate for many nursing homes exceeds 50% per year. In contrast, some nursing homes have made changes that keep turnover rates in the single digits. High turnover can lead to demoralized employees, and in many cases, quality problems.

To check out the article in Modern Health Care, [click here](#).

### **MDS 3.0**

#### **Pressure Ulcer Monitoring Tool**

By now, nursing homes across the country are gearing up for the October 1 start date to implement MDS 3.0. Until sufficient data has been collected and the new quality measures are finalized, nursing homes will lose the ability to monitor performance based on QIs and QMs. It will be very important for nursing home QA and QI staff to use internal tools to monitor clinical goals such as pressure ulcers and restraints. Watch the Campaign Web site ([www.nhqualitycampaign.org](http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org)) for related information and suggested QI tools to help you! Contact Carol Benner with any questions at, [cbenner@aaahsa.org](mailto:cbenner@aaahsa.org).

### **New to the Campaign**

#### **Welcome Tammy Rolfe**

Welcome to Tammy Rolfe, the newly appointed Field Operations Manager for the Advancing Excellence Campaign. Tammy comes to the Campaign from the Maine Health Care Association where she was responsible for quality improvement, regulatory affairs, and all things culture change. In addition, she was president of the Maine Culture Change Coalition and the Maine LANE. Tammy is a licensed nursing home administrator and a licensed registered nurse. In her first two weeks at AAHSA, Tammy visited the LANE in Alabama, participated in the Pioneer Network Conference, and visited the Illinois LANE! Her primary responsibilities for the Campaign will be to work with the State LANEs, and the local statewide coalitions that promote the AE Campaign. Tammy can be reached at [rolfe@aaahsa.org](mailto:rolfe@aaahsa.org).

## Critical Access Nursing Homes

### AE Critical Access Project Kicks Off

What are Critical - Access Nursing Homes (CANHs)? AE has defined them as nursing homes located in inner city neighborhoods which serve largely minority communities of generally low socio-economic status. They are termed "critical" because the community depends on these nursing homes to provide post-acute and long term care services. Not having high quality nursing homes close to where people live complicates discharges from local hospitals and forces elderly residents to go to more distant nursing homes far from family and friends. Further, these nursing homes are an important source of employment for people in the community. Nursing home closures threaten jobs.

The project is using the Campaign's LANE structure to test an intervention that will utilize the resources available through Advancing Excellence and mobilize the commitment and expertise of a LANE's constituent organizations to help improve quality in facilities defined as CANHs. Participation is voluntary.

Four states (OH, IL, GA, and IN) are part of the project. Within those states we have targeted the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) around Cleveland, Chicago, Macon, and South Chicago respectively.

## From Someone who has been there...

### Real World Applications

David Farrell, an administrator in California, shared his experiences when his company just bought a city home in Oakland that is a critical access home.

He feels the root cause for these nursing home's challenges is always staff stability. He focuses immediately on staff coordination, schedules, and having sufficient staff. Often these homes have the wrong staff and need to make some changes. The larger the home/corporation, the greater the number of changes necessary, often from top to bottom. Training the wrong people will not make a better nursing home. David knows that quality of life is as important as quality of care. Staff at all levels can manage the quality of care, but few know anything about quality of life. Thus, he concentrates immediately on requiring contribution from every staff on quality of life equally with quality of care. Those that cannot make that transition end up working elsewhere. As the home begins to improve, those who cannot make the quality of life shift are replaced by those who can. It is not the policies, it is the people. Change in nursing homes is very tough unless you get the right people, leading to staff stability and consistent assignment.

In order to begin this process, David begins to build an environment where supplies are available. He ensures his staff has enough bedding, towels, good equipment such as lifts, and other supplies that support staff work. Critical access nursing homes have often been through years of fines and sometimes lawsuits that cause even greater hardship on staff and residents as supplies and CNAs become scarcer. With change, as staff stabilizes, a nursing home may begin to attract a few Medicare residents that will allow a home to break even for the first time. There must be a business plan that will lead to this outcome. But concentrate on human resources first.

Critical access nursing homes can sustain success with an improved bottom line. Nursing home improvement has three parts: human resources, environment, and systems. In the first 90 days at his present home, he kept a running tab of the evolutionary (not revolutionary) changes and 45 of these were about human resources. This has led to greater staff stability with the right people. Quoting

#### Physician Advocate for Critical Access Nursing Homes

Dr. D. Mahajan is a certified medical director (CMD) with a substantial practice in nursing facilities in the Chicago area, one of the four locales for the Critical Access Project. He attended the kick off meeting and he agrees that staff is crucial to success, including physicians. As a board member of the IL QIO, he plans to take a leadership role with area physicians. "I have implemented AMDA CPGs in the NFs where I am medical director; training the care team members in the care process and on the various clinical areas. I see the improvement." Many AE technical materials are based in the CPG process.

Golden Living, David says that measurement is NOT support. The changes in people and supplies are support. Measurement will follow.

Another point David made was that as these changes are being made, the nursing home is building a community. He has regular meetings with people. This builds the basis for person-centered care, which he believes will get a critical access nursing home out of the mess they have gotten into.

David J. Farrell, MSW, LNHA, Regional Director of Operations, is Director of Organizational Development for SnF Management in West Hollywood, CA. He is a licensed nursing home administrator, author and member of the Pioneer Network Board.

### **Advancing Excellence in Action**

[Look for AE at Upcoming National Meetings](#)

AE will have an exhibit at both the AHCA/NCAL Annual Convention in Long Beach October 10-13, 2010 and at AAHSA's 2010 Annual meeting and Exposition October 31 - November 4 in Los Angeles. Staff will be sharing a variety of useful resources and can help with ideas that have worked for others in the Initiative. Stop by and visit AE.

### **Advancing Excellence Resources**

[LANE Toolkit](#)

A toolkit on Media Relations has been posted to help LANEs spread the word about AE in the local media. It is a collection of tip sheets and templates that help simplify and guide communications efforts. Make sure you check it out!