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National Campaign to Improve Nursing Home Quality Gives Residents and Family Members Tools to Navigate Nursing Home Care

Advancing Excellence Campaign Enters New Phase That Focuses On Improving Care and Quality of Life in Nursing Homes

Washington, DC —The largest, voluntary group of its kind working together in every state to improve the quality of care for nursing home residents today released a guide to help consumers to become a partner in improving standards of care in long-term care facilities.

The *Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes* Campaign's Consumer Tip Sheet, together with a more comprehensive Consumer Guide, provides nursing home residents and family members basic information and 10 questions they should be asking to better understand resident care planning, staffing, important care issues and the significance of measuring resident and family satisfaction. In a typical year, 3.2 million Americans will spend some time in a nursing home. Although there are many guides for choosing a nursing home already available, the *Campaign* is trying to help residents and their families ensure the best care and quality of life while in a nursing home.

“Consumers must take a more active role in pushing for higher quality of care for family members or for themselves,” says Mary Jane Koren, M.D., M.P.H., chair of *Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes* and assistant vice president of The Commonwealth Fund in New York. “The thousands of nursing homes that belong to this *Campaign* are committed to improving care, and residents, as well as their families, need to be a partner in that process,” she adds.

The *Advancing Excellence* campaign began in 2006 as a national drive to improve nursing home quality, and since then it has worked steadily to achieve measurable improvements in nursing home care.

Nursing homes that have participated in this initiative have made faster progress at improving key quality goals such as reducing rates of pressure ulcers, improving management of pain, and significantly reducing use of physical restraints.

To help members improve, the Campaign, via its website, provides technical assistance, online resources, and other materials for nursing home staff and consumers. In addition to the 28 participating national organizations representing nursing homes, health care professionals and direct care workers, quality improvement experts, consumers and government agencies such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Veterans Administration an established, infrastructure of Local Area Networks for Excellence (LANEs) provides support and information in every state.

“Advancing the quality and value of nursing home care is critical for the Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries we serve,” said Barry M. Straube, M.D., CMS Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Agency’s Office of Clinical Standards & Quality. “We are deeply committed to working with providers to improve the care residents receive and the quality of life they enjoy in America’s nursing homes. CMS’ work with the Campaign allows us to expand our quality focus to equip residents and families with the information they need to help drive further improvement.”

In January, the Campaign entered its second phase, adding some new goals and making it easier to measure and track progress. In addition to setting and measuring clinical goals, the Campaign is now working to help nursing homes retain good workers, which can make for higher quality of care, and make sure residents are consistently cared for by the same aides in order to build stronger relationships, which is valued by residents, and leads to better care.

Nearly half of the nation’s nursing homes have joined Advancing Excellence but the goal is to get most nursing homes to sign up and set measurable quality goals. In addition, more than 2,000 consumers have joined the Campaign.

To learn more or get a copy of the new Consumer Tip Sheet or new guide for consumers visit the Campaign’s website at www.nhqualitycampaign.org.

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