Advancing Excellence and Hallmark Staff Recognition

The Advancing Excellence in America’s Nursing Homes Campaign had a successful year, especially in Ohio. The Campaign is the premier example of the benefit of many different organizations and individuals coming together for one mission: to make nursing facilities better places to live, work, and visit. Consumers and their advocates including the ombudsman, nursing facilities, companies that provide services and supplies to nursing homes, nurses, direct-care staff, physicians, and others are working together to promote quality improvement goals across the country.

Nursing facilities participating in Advancing Excellence are encouraged to select and report progress on at least two goals from the nine that are the core of the Campaign:

- Consistent assignment of staff to promote relationship-based care
- Safely reducing hospitalization
- Person-centered care
- Staff stability
- Tracking infections for prevention
- Medication management
- Mobility
- Pain management
- Pressure ulcer reduction

So far, 26% of nursing facilities in the country have selected goals but 92% of Ohio nursing facilities have selected goals – the highest in the country! Ohio’s providers understand that setting targets and monitoring through data will help them improve at a faster rate.

An exciting new development will continue the movement toward higher quality. Advancing Excellence has partnered with Hallmark to launch “You Make a Difference,” a staff recognition program. By connecting to www.aeltcc.org, an administrator can acknowledge achievements and milestones easily. Using the many online resources and the program’s website, administrators can order Hallmark greeting cards and certificates, personalize messages of gratitude, and include gift cards from among hundreds of retailers. We know that the heart of excellent care is the relationship between residents and staff; focusing on staff stability is an important tool to support those relationships. The Hallmark partnership with Advancing Excellence is another step to realizing the mission of making nursing homes better places to live, work, and visit.
Embracing Person Centered Care to Improve Outcomes and Satisfaction

Anne R. Bacon, Corporate Director of Business Development
HCF, Inc.

Person Centered Care has been a buzz word in the post-acute industry for a number of years. To HCF, it’s more than a word – it is a company-wide philosophy that drives each care community to embrace the personal preferences of residents and get to know each like family. HCF utilizes Person Centered Care in an effort to become less institutional and to improve outcomes, satisfaction, and overall well-being to those within their care communities. Susan Marsico, LNHA and HCF Director of Training, has been involved with a number of the patient centered initiatives and training activities throughout the organization. In her words, “Person centered care empowers all those involved! Residents and patients are encouraged to make daily choices about their care and the schedule they wish to keep, and it engages caregivers to respond to these choices. I can’t imagine it any other way.”

This philosophy directly impacts HCF capital improvement projects, staffing structures, care plans, and the daily activities in each care community throughout the organization. Patient Centered Care is a unified focus that drives all departments to work together towards quality outcomes and high levels of patient satisfaction.

Each new HCF facility or renovation is carefully crafted to embrace a neighborhood feel, promoting socialization and independence with the comforts of home. Many care communities have gathering places such as cafes, lounges, ice cream parlors, chapels, and dining rooms. This person centered care approach brings interaction to moments in each resident’s day and encourages engagement and activity. Residents have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of activities with life-long friends who are welcomed by the warm environment and new friends made within the care community. The benefits from healthy socialization are countless.

Person Centered Care initiatives address such things as dining options, birthday celebrations, waking times, bathing times, staffing consistency, medication usage and alternative care interventions, and are being encouraged throughout the organization through the use of the HCF Management Culture Change Scorecard. Developed by the HCF Champions of Person Centered Care team, and based on the CMS Artifacts of Change, this tool has greatly influenced the momentum for Person Centered Care and allows us to monitor each care community’s progress. The scorecard keeps Person Centered Care initiatives “top of mind” and serves as a motivator for each care community to integrate Person Centered Care in to everyday practice. The goal is that what we are doing today will become the new “normal” for patient care in our industry.

Briarwood Village in Coldwater, Ohio was one of the first HCF care communities to truly embrace Person Centered Care. As they made changes to the way they cared for patients and residents, the common question was always, “How would they have done it at home?” By asking this question, Briarwood Village re-evaluated many of the facility’s common practices and looked for opportunities to be more person centered. The facility implemented activities like cooking groups and removed noise contributors like audible call lights, resident personal and pressure alarms, as well as overhead paging. They also got away from acute care practices that involve waking patients overnight. What a difference a night of uninterrupted sleep can make! Briarwood also discontinued using clothing protectors that looked much like bibs. While intentions were well-meaning, this is not a practice that is done in the home. The goal is to be as close to home as possible.

To further commit to the person centered care approach, HCF incorporated their Joy in Moments programming. The focus is on what brings a patient or resident “joy”.

From moments in their day such as a warm cup of herbal tea, to enjoying a ride in a convertible, this program emphasizes knowing the individual and their needs or desires, not just their treatment or diagnosis.
St. Marys Living Center Earns AHCA/NCAL Silver Quality Award

Kristin Powell, LNHA

St Marys Living Center in St. Marys (SMLC), Ohio is a proud recipient of the 2014 American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living’s (AHCA/NCAL) Silver Achievement in Quality, National Quality Award in recognition of outstanding performance in the health care profession, and is a recipient of a Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) 5-Star Quality Rating.

Located in the western Ohio community of St. Marys, SMLC is a 45 bed skilled nursing facility that has been an active community partner for the past 30 years. Skilled nursing services include wound care and treatment of diabetic neuropathy and specialized dysphasia treatment. The facility provides skilled rehabilitation (physical, occupational and speech therapy) services and outpatient therapy services which provide continuity to patients returning home. In addition, private assisted living suites create flexibility and transitional opportunities for residents returning to the community.

By providing three levels of care at one location, St. Marys creates great clinical outcomes for patients; success of facility health care services and core competencies is benchmarked by our overall improved census; the increase in customer satisfaction scores; reduced LOS and increased referrals of wound care patients and patients with dysphasia as a secondary diagnosis.

SMLC’s mission is to honor and respect each resident we serve while providing thoughtful and exceptional healthcare services in a safe, clean, and friendly environment. We are proud that our facility functions foremost as the residents’ home, followed by serving as a gathering place for family and friends and reflecting a welcoming atmosphere that is supportive of our staff and local community.”

The mission is proudly posted and communicated to employees, residents, their families and visitors.

The facility’s Continuous Quality/Performance Improvement Committee (CQPI) is the driving force of our performance improvement practices, and has led to improvements in disaster planning and safety measures; a steady decline in resident weight loss and pain; and continuous improvement in satisfaction scores.

In fact, during 2011, 2012 and 2013, SMLC was selected by the “Peoples’ Choice Awards” as the ‘Best Nursing Home’ in the community. Based on scores from the Ohio Department Of Aging, SMLC was the only nursing facility out of 5 county facilities to score 90% or higher in all categories of satisfaction, including family satisfaction; resident satisfaction.

Receiving the Silver Quality Award is truly an honor. It not only recognizes the hard work of all of our team members at St. Marys, it allows us to further our care for our residents through increased recognition and awareness. We are proud of this accomplishment and thank not only our past and present residents, but the entire St. Marys community for their positive feedback and support.
Achieving Smooth Transitions of Care

Dottie Howe, Director of Communications for the Ohio Health Information Partnership, which manages the CliniSync Health Information Exchange.

If you get transferred from the hospital to a skilled nursing or assisted living facility, you want your doctors to have your complete medical records transmitted on time, right? You expect those clinicians caring for you to know what tests you’ve had, procedures or surgeries you’ve undergone, everything down to the correct dosage on your medication list.

That’s not always the case in the paper world, where paper files can get delayed, faxing slows things down, and you may arrive at the facility before your paper records ever get there. In some cases, records show up a week later or need to be hand-delivered in person.

Ohio now has the ability to electronically exchange and transmit patients’ electronic health records from the hospital to a nursing home in real time. That translates into better and more efficient care for you or your loved one.

More than 225 long-term care, rehabilitation and home health facilities in Ohio now can share patient information through the CliniSync statewide health information exchange.

Not to be confused with an insurance exchange, this network lets doctors, hospitals, practices and anyone else involved in your care to electronically share your records.

More than 140 Ohio hospitals now are connected or are in the process of going live on the network. And this is happening in states all over the nation.

Eliminating old-fashioned methods of transmission

For the 25 skilled nursing facilities managed by HCF Management in Lima, the sheer efficiency of no longer dealing with paper is the first step in providing better care for their patients, says Scott Unverferth, the director of operations for HCF.

“When we get a referral from a social worker, they fax us the referral, history and physicals, lab reports, and we look it over. Once the resident is admitted, a packet with orders and everything from the hospitals is sent to us. It’s both faxed and sent with the patient,” Unverferth explains. “But the fax machine may be out of paper or out of toner, you may have to call back, you may be missing a page.”

Jean Marquette, director of electronic records, says, “For instance, if we receive information on a Tuesday from a hospital referral but the patient doesn’t come to the facility until Friday, the new orders received after the Tuesday fax and before the admission on Friday don’t get faxed or sent,” Marquette explains.

Unverferth says electronic sharing of records also reduces duplication of tests and procedures, such as two x-rays at two different locations. “The resident has to go through that and there’s a
cost for that. Hopefully the patient experience is better and the cost goes down, too,” Unverferth says.

**Improving quality of care for patients**

Joyce Miller Evans, vice president and chief information officer for Columbus-based Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services with 12 locations in Ohio, says sharing documents when a patient transitions from the hospital to a long-term care facility enhances the quality of care for patients.

“Quality is going to drive everything we do, and transitions of care is all about quality,” Evans says. “The number one problem we all face is medication reconciliation, and we will now be able to accept a transition of care document directly into the electronic health record system so everyone can see procedures, major events and medications.”

Preventing adverse drug interactions and getting an accurate picture of a patient’s medication history can guarantee better quality outcomes for patients, but it also includes cost savings and efficient care.

“This kind of electronic exchange decreases cost, eliminates unnecessary tests, reconciles medication problems, reduces duplication of tests, and allows our clinicians to respond more quickly to the results that come from hospitals,” she says.

**Summaries of care help clinicians, too**

Lois Uhl, an RN and clinical informatics coordinator at Pomerene hospitals, says, “All of the information previously came in from a variety of sources including from doctors, from phone calls and paper sources – now it’s all concise in one clear electronic document.”

The care summary consolidates all of the pertinent clinical information into a concise document that can be transparent to disparate systems, Uhl explains.

“When we eventually don’t have to copy or fax, the nurses love when they can send it electronically. It saves time and is an easy process to follow. Eventually, I think both hospitals and long-term care facilities are really going to like it,” she says.

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**Faces of Long-Term Care**

Many Ohioans have had their lives touched by long-term care as a resident, care provider, family member or loved one. Even if they have not had direct experience, chances are they know someone who has.

*Faces of Long-Term Care* is an initiative to give a voice and public presence to residents and caregivers through a variety of forums. The Ohio Health Care Association is working with the American Health Care Association (AHCA) to establish a presence on Facebook, websites and other social media featuring the images and words of residents, family members, caregivers and others.

The first step in this initiative features a series of weekly “Faces of Long-Term Care” posts to the OHCA Facebook page, which have resulted in numerous “likes” and re-posts. In addition, AHCA/NCAL has established a “Faces of Assisted Living” website that will serve as the base for future efforts.

Providers, family members and residents who would like to take part in this program can post images, stories and quotes directly to the Association’s Facebook page. Providers posting images or quotes from residents should have signed releases in the residents’ files.

Watch for future activity as this initiative kicks off. *Faces of Long-Term Care* is designed to grow into a rewarding community where participants can share and enjoy the experiences and successes of others.

**Find us on the web:**

[www.ohca.org](http://www.ohca.org)