Continuous quality improvement is important for all assisted living communities. Improving the quality of care for your residents isn’t just the right thing to do—it can also impact your bottom line. In today’s changing health care market, it is important to demonstrate high quality outcomes to residents, families, and other health care providers. To prosper, you must make quality improvement an intricate part of your culture.

- Gain a competitive edge and improve your marketability to your consumers.
- Engage your staff by motivating them with a sense of purpose to improve the lives of the residents they serve.
- Push back against the public’s negative perception of long term care.
- Increasing state regulations are trending toward connecting quality outcomes with survey and compliance.
- Make your community a desirable partner for other health care providers (e.g., hospitals), managed care and accountable care organizations (ACOs), as well as REITs, all of whom are looking for high-quality care providers to reduce costs and ensure financial stability.

AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program  |  qa.ahca.org

The AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program provides a pathway for long term and post-acute care providers, including assisted living communities, to journey towards performance excellence. Member communities may apply for three progressive levels of awards, each of which have their own distinct rigors and requirements:

- **Bronze—Commitment to Quality**: assess your organization’s mission, vision, and key factors that lead to success
- **Silver—Achievement in Quality**: develop approaches that help improve performance and health care outcomes
- **Gold—Excellence in Quality**: show superior performance in areas of leadership, strategic planning, and customer and staff satisfaction

The Quality Award Program is based on the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework, which is an application process to allow businesses from all industries to examine their systems and current processes, create benchmarks, and identify areas of success as well as improvements using an individualized feedback report.

Skilled nursing data indicates that Quality Award recipients perform better than their counterparts on a number of quality and operational metrics.\(^1\)[\(^2\)]

**Quality Performance Measures**

2013-2017 Silver and Gold Recipients vs. the Nation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Percent better than national average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Readmissions</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary Tract Infections</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Label Use Antipsychotics</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure Ulcers</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharge to Community</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Business Advantage for Owners**

2013-2017 Silver and Gold Recipients vs. the Nation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quality Awards</th>
<th>The Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy Rate</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Margin</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
<td>-5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Nursing Home Compare (data through Q1 2018) and LTC Trend Tracker (Q2 2017).
2 Financial data from FY2016 CMS Cost Reports and July 2018 Nursing Home Compare.
NCAL’s Quality Initiative is a national effort that sets specific, measurable targets to further improve quality of care in America’s assisted living communities. NCAL member providers are encouraged to reach defined, concrete goals in four core areas by 2021. Achieving each goal can help an assisted living community improve as an organization:

**Staff Stability**
- Reduce turnover among direct care staff to a rate of 50% or less

**Customer Satisfaction**
- Residents and/or family members are satisfied with their experience 90% or more

**Hospital Readmissions**
- Safely reduce hospital readmissions within 30 days of hospital discharges to a rate of 20% or less

**Antipsychotics**
- Safely reduce the off-label use of antipsychotics to a rate of 15% or less

**DISCLAIMER:** The AHCA/NCAL quality programs’ contents, including their goals and standards, represent some preferred practices, but do not represent minimum standards or expected norms for skilled nursing and/or assisted living providers. As always, the provider is responsible for making clinical decisions and providing care that is best for each individual person.

**LTC Trend Tracker℠**
Data is a vital part of continuous quality improvement. With data, assisted living communities can identify areas for improvement and set reasonable goals. LTC Trend Tracker, an AHCA/NCAL member benefit, allows member assisted living communities to upload and track key quality metrics, including all four goals of the Quality Initiative for Assisted Living. Communities can then benchmark their results against custom peer groups.

LTC Trend Tracker tracks the following assisted living measures:

- **Staff Turnover & Retention**
- **Customer Satisfaction**
- **Antipsychotic Off-label Use**
- **Hospital Admissions**
- **Hospital Readmissions**
- **Occupancy Rates**

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