# QUALITY
# IMPROVEMENT

THROUGH THE AHCA/NCAL QUALITY AWARD PROCESS

## *It's the Journey that Matters!*

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**NCAL**®
NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING

# NCAL®

## NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING

## BACKGROUND

Continuous quality improvement is the foundation for any organization to remain sustainable, innovative, and successful.

**Quality Improvement** (QI) is a structured approach to evaluate the performance of systems and processes to determine where improvements are needed in operational and functional areas.

- QI is data driven.
- QI focuses on processes, not people.
- QI involves people as part of the improvement solution, engaging employees directly involved in and who best understand the processes within the organization.

**Purpose of QI** – QI aims to create efficiencies and address customer needs. The main purpose is to improve outcomes. Continuous QI is based on a method to identify problems, as well as implement, monitor, provide corrective actions and innovations. This process is done through four steps that can be further broken down into a formalized QI process. The four steps are approach, deployment, learning, and integration.

- **Approach** – Systematic approaches are repeatable and use data and information to enable learning. Approaches are systematic if they occur in a regular manner and build in the opportunity for evaluation and improvement.

- **Deployment** – Deployment information should summarize how your approaches are implemented or 'deployed' in different parts of your organization. Deployment is best described by telling the "who" and "when" of how an approach happens.

- **Learning** – Learning includes evaluation, and improvement. It is important to evaluate the actual processes that you are implementing, not to simply respond to information that you learn from the processes. Whenever possible, the evaluation of your processes should be fact-based. You can then work to continuously improve those processes and describe improvements based on the evaluation and when you implemented the improvement.

- **Integration** – Integration shows alignment and harmonization among processes, plans, measures, actions, and results that generate organizational effectiveness and efficiencies.

## BENEFITS OF QI PROCESS

- Solutions focus on process failures, not flaws in people.

- Rely on objective, data-driven solutions (that are not subjective opinions) to prevent errors, identify inefficiencies, and remedy inadequate processes.

- Improvements are aimed at greater safety, better customer service and satisfaction, higher revenues, and increased efficiency.

- Rather than making several changes all at one time, it uses localized focus on small testing or pilots for incremental improvements. This results in a more controlled process for change with more sustainable results.

- Uses data collection to set goals and monitor improvement efforts.

## COMMON OUTCOMES OF QI PROCESS PROJECTS

- Standardization eliminates the need for individual decision making.

- When organizational culture engages teams in reporting errors and near misses, it generates data creating a foundation for understanding root causes and fosters a culture of safety.

- Creates a team culture of accountability, responsiveness, and cohesion.

## ENCOURAGING QI CULTURE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

- Train stakeholders (including employees) in QI processes and tools that encourage them to contribute to the processes.
- Discuss QI in meetings and recruit champions (influencers) to share QI values.
- Recognize organizational QI achievements.
- Engage in data monitoring, tracking, and trending through the utilization of LTC Trend Tracker.
- Schedule regular data monitoring and data reviews.
- Share results from projects throughout organization, including creating visual displays of results in central locations for all to see.
- Encourage employees to contribute to QI efforts.
- Recognize employee QI efforts.
- Establish a fun competition with a sister site.

## AHCA/NCAL QUALITY AWARD PROGRAM

- The AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award program is a rigorous three-level process that evaluates an organization's capabilities against nationally recognized standards for excellence, the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.
- This nationally recognized framework utilizes systems-based quality improvement principles to improve performance in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, customers, workforce, operations, and data/knowledge management.
- Participants move through progressive award levels— Bronze, Silver, and Gold, each requiring a more detailed demonstration of superior performance, and are recognized nationally for their achievements.

### Value of the AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program

- An outside, non-biased, professional assessment of your center
- Learning from the feedback report
- Team building
- Becoming stronger and more resilient
- A focus on results
- Recognition and pride
- Opportunity for ongoing sustainable growth in many areas

### Where to Start

- Review the systems that you currently have in place to ensure that the data being entered is accurate and reflective of the current situation in your community.
- Figure out what data can be easily and consistently extracted from your systems to track and trend over time.
- Refine your metrics to drive the change you want to see.

## LEARN MORE AT WWW.AHCANCAL.ORG/QUALITYAWARD