

Quality Counts

Arizona Nursing Home Quality Initiative

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Advancing Collaboration Across the Continuum of Care

Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG), in lieu of hosting a Spring 2007 Nursing Home Work Group Meeting, is cosponsoring two upcoming summits:

2007 Reducing Pressure Ulcers Summit

Wednesday, May 23

Black Canyon Conference Center
9440 N. 25th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85021

For registration information, visit

<http://www.signup4.net/Public/ap.aspx?EID=THEN37E>.

2007 Reducing Restraints Summit

Wednesday, June 27

Desert Willow Conference Center
4340 E. Cotton Center Blvd., Phoenix, AZ 85040

For registration information, visit

<http://www.signup4.net/Public/ap.aspx?EID=THEN38E>.

Each summit is approved by the Arizona Board of Examiners for Nursing Care Institution Administrators and Assisted Living Facility Managers for 4.5 CEUs. For more information and alternate registration options, call 602.445.4300.

CMS Open Door Forum

The next CMS Skilled Nursing Facility/ Long-Term Care Open Door Forum is scheduled for June 21.

For more information and to register to receive updates, please visit http://www.cms.hhs.gov/OpenDoorForums/25_ODF_SNFLTC.asp.

Medicare Appeals: Provider Information

To view HSAG's new Medicare provider Web page that contains information about fee-for-service and Medicare Advantage benefits, visit <http://www.hsag.com/providers>.

The page contains information on:

- The beneficiary notices initiative (BNI).
- Managed care appeals and grievances.
- Sample notice forms (downloadable).
- The *Federal Register* BIPA regulation.

Join the Advancing Excellence Campaign

It's not too late to join the *Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes* Quality Campaign. This coalition-based, two-year campaign launched in September 2006 to reinvigorate efforts to improve the quality of life for those living or recuperating in America's nursing homes. The campaign's coalition includes long-term care providers, caregivers, medical and quality improvement experts, government agencies, and others.

This voluntary campaign targets eight measurable clinical-quality and organizational-improvement goals on which nursing homes can work to improve their quality of care. Consumers are also joining the campaign.

For more information about the *Advancing Excellence* campaign and to register, please visit <http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>.

Source: <http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>.

CDC Falls Management Resource

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a Web page devoted to falls in nursing homes.

One point of interest is the CDC's stance on restraint usage in the nursing home, which states:

- Restraint usage does not lower the risk of falls or injuries.
- Restraints can actually add to the risk of fall-related injuries and deaths.
- Since federal regulations took effect in 1990, nursing homes have reduced the use of physical restraints. Some nursing homes have reported an increase in falls since these regulations took effect, but most have seen a drop in fall-related injuries.

Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/nursing.htm> to obtain statistical information and tips for fall management.

Please share this information with your residents, staff, and family members. Together we can make a difference.

Paid Feeding Assistant Study

Results from a recent federally commissioned study suggest that paid feeding assistants (PFAs) are welcome additions to the nursing home staff. In interviews with researchers, administrators and management staff from seven nursing homes in three states were so pleased with the work of the PFAs in their facilities that they planned to train more of these workers. Similarly, nearly all of the 54 CNAs interviewed for the study reported that the PFAs were "helpful" and that they had "no concerns" about the work of these assistants.

The new research findings, reported in the April 2007 issue of *The Gerontologist* (<http://gerontologist.gerontologyjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/47/2/184>), are considered preliminary due to limitations in the study's design. The researchers from the Center for Quality Aging at Vanderbilt University and Abt Associates, Inc., a research consulting firm based in Massachusetts, used a convenience sample of nursing homes, as opposed to a random sample, so participating facilities may have been biased in ways that favor the use of PFAs. That said, the results are strong enough that they should help allay concerns about PFAs.

The researchers found that the quality of feeding assistance provided by PFAs was comparable to that delivered by CNAs. There were no reported changes in staffing levels following implementation of the PFA program, which suggests that PFAs were not replacing other front-line workers. Additionally, most other staff not only supported the use of PFAs, but expressed enthusiasm about the program.

The study also shed light on the kinds of workers who fill PFA positions and what this new job entails. Five of the participating facilities trained only non-nursing staff from their own facilities as PFAs, including social workers, administrators, housekeepers, and dietitians. The other two facilities recruited from within as well as from the community. In four facilities, PFA training was voluntary; one required that all laundry

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and housekeeping staff complete the training, and the remaining facilities wrote PFA training into selected job descriptions, such as housekeeping.

Source: Anna Rahman, UCLA Borun Center for Gerontological Research. <http://gerontologist.gerontologyjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/47/2/184>.

CMS Proposes Increase in Payments

Medicare payments to nursing homes would increase by approximately \$690 million in fiscal year 2008 under new rates proposed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This 3.3 percent increase would affect payment rates to nursing facilities that furnish certain skilled nursing and rehabilitation care to Medicare beneficiaries recovering from serious health problems. The proposed rule for the

skilled nursing facility prospective payment system (SNF PPS) was in the May 1 *Federal Register*.

To see the CMS press release, visit http://www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/media/press_releases.asp. For additional information about the SNF PPS, including a link to the proposed regulation, visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/snfpps>.

NADONA/LTC—Arizona Chapter

You can make a difference

Since 1986, the National Association Directors of Nursing Administration/Long Term Care (NADONA/LTC) has been a leading advocate and educational organization for DONs, ADONS, and RNs in LTC.

Learn how you can make a difference and become involved in local NADONA/LTC efforts. For more information, please contact Diane Kubala, NADONA/LTC Arizona Chapter President, at 602.931.8487 or at residents_first@yahoo.com.

Nursing Home GAO Report

Efforts to strengthen federal enforcements have not deterred some homes from repeatedly harming residents

The *New York Times* recently published an article previewing a report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on the lack of federal regulation of poorly performing nursing homes. The report calls for additional fines and other sanctions to be assigned to long-term care facilities that fail to comply with federal standards of care.

In the late 1990s, the GAO concluded that enforcement actions, or sanctions, were ineffective in encouraging nursing homes to maintain compliance with federal quality requirements. Sanctions were often rescinded before being implemented because homes had a grace period to correct deficiencies. In response, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) began requiring immediate sanctions for

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Arizona Health Care Association (AHCA) Annual Conference and Trade Show

August 28–30, 2007

DoubleTree Paradise Valley Resort

More information will be available on <http://www.azhca.org> in the near future.

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homes that repeatedly harmed residents.

Using CMS enforcement and deficiency data, the GAO:

- Analyzed federal sanctions from fiscal years 2000–2005 against 63 homes previously reviewed.
- Assessed CMS’ overall management of enforcement.

The 63 homes had a history of harming residents and were located in four states that account for about 22 percent of homes nationwide.

The report recommends that the CMS Administrator:

- Develop an administrative process for collecting civil money penalties more expeditiously and seek legislation to implement this process effectively.
- Strengthen its immediate sanctions policy.
- Expand its oversight of homes with a history of harming residents.
- Improve the effectiveness of its enforcement data systems.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, please visit <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07241.pdf>.

Source: *Highlights of GAO-07-241, a report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate.* <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07241.pdf>.

Upcoming Provider Satisfaction Survey

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will conduct a satisfaction survey between May and August of 2007 to evaluate HSAG’s work, as the Arizona Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), with your nursing home.

The survey will come from Westat, the third-party provider that is handling the survey for CMS. These confidential surveys will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. CMS will use them to assess the work of QIOs across the country.

HSAG has provided your nursing home with resources and assistance to support you in developing and reviewing your QI plans and/or implementing your QI projects. With the assistance from our staff through site visits, telephone conversations, conference calls, e-mails, conferences, and materials such as manuals and newsletters, we have worked to ensure that you have the most up-to-date information and support for your QI efforts.

We know your time is valuable and greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this very important survey. Your participation is voluntary. The information provided to Westat will remain confidential. Survey results will be reported to HSAG in aggregate only and will not be associated with your name or the name of your nursing home.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

HSAG Nursing Home Team Contact Information

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