



Press Release

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Long-Term Care Stakeholders Join Together to Improve Quality for Pennsylvania's 80,000 Nursing Home Residents

State Joins National Campaign, 'Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes'

WALLINGFORD, Delaware County – Pennsylvania's long-term care providers, patient advocates, family members, consumers, health care professionals and state government agencies have teamed up in an unprecedented way to participate in a national campaign aimed at improving quality of care and quality of life for the nearly 80,000 nursing home residents here in the Commonwealth.

Nearly 300 nursing homes – more than 40 percent – already have signed up for Advancing Excellence, even before today's official kick-off. Organizations and agencies who are leading Pennsylvania's Advancing Excellence campaign are encouraging all nursing homes in the commonwealth to participate in this voluntary, two-year project.

The partnership is unique in that it comprises groups with differing memberships — and sometimes differing priorities — that have found common ground in striving jointly to improve the lives of the residents they serve. The partnership was announced at Wallingford Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, an Advancing Excellence participant.

“We have seen improvements in the quality of care in our nursing homes in recent years, yet we know we can do even better,” said Dr. David Wenner, Medical Director of Quality Insights of Pennsylvania, one of the organizations that are spearheading Pennsylvania's participation in Advancing Excellence. “We stand here united today to improve both the quality of care and quality of life for our commonwealth's oldest and frailest residents.”

To ensure that continuous quality improvement is comprehensive, sustainable and person-centered, Advancing Excellence offers these eight goals to participants who must adopt a minimum of three to participate:

- Reducing high-risk pressure ulcers (bed sores)
- Reducing the use of daily restraints
- Improving pain management for long-term nursing home residents
- Improving pain management for short-term nursing home residents
- Enhancing family and resident satisfaction with the quality of care
- Establishing individual targets for improving quality
- Increasing staff retention
- Improving consistent assignment of nursing home staff, so that residents regularly receive care from the same caregivers.

“We believe there should be two types of nursing homes: the excellent and the non-existent.” said PANPHA president and CEO Ron Barth. “As providers, we know that we must earn the public’s trust through quality improvement and transparent accountability. And in very practical terms, participation in the campaign by thousands of nursing homes will give providers in Pennsylvania and throughout the nation reliable, collective data on quality improvement.”

The campaign comes at a critical time – the nation’s 77 million baby boomers will begin turning 65 in three years and the need for quality long-term care will dramatically escalate in the years that follow.

The quality improvement campaign is especially critical in Pennsylvania, which ranks third nationally in the percentage of population age 65 or older, behind Florida and West Virginia, and fourth in the number of residents age 85 or older --- a segment of the population that comprises the most intensive users of nursing home care. Nearly 70 percent of Pennsylvanians turning 65 this year eventually will require long-term care.

“The Rendell Administration supports the Advancing Excellence in America’s Nursing Homes campaign as part of a larger strategy to improve quality in the commonwealth’s health care system,” said Mike Hall, Deputy Secretary for Long-Term Living. “Improving the quality of long term care in all settings is an integral piece of the Prescription for Pennsylvania health care reform plan. As the long term living environment evolves to meet changing consumer needs and preferences we look forward to working with the industry to achieve quality health outcomes for PA citizens.”

Said Dr. Stuart Shapiro, President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Health Care Association, “Quality health care is not an abstract concept. It is about delivering the right care to every resident every time, and avoiding unnecessary suffering or complications. I am pleased that so many nursing homes, so many organizations, and so many people from different professions and different perspectives, but who

all care deeply about the quality of life in Pennsylvania nursing homes, are working hand in hand for the 80,000 elderly and disabled residents who entrust their care to us.”

Advancing Excellence was founded in late 2006 by national organizations and government agencies, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Quality Improvement Organizations, the Commonwealth Fund, American Health Care Association, American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, American Medical Directors Association, National Citizens’ Coalition for Nursing Home Reform and National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care. To learn more about the national campaign, visit www.nhqualitycampaign.org.

Nursing homes have made improvements in staffing, care and outcomes over the years. The campaign builds on and complements the work of existing quality initiatives, including the Nursing Home Quality Initiative (NHQI) inaugurated by CMS in 2002 and the profession-driven Quality First program.

Quality Insights of Pennsylvania is the Commonwealth’s Medicare Quality Improvement Organization, working with Pennsylvania’s health-care providers to foster an environment in which every patient receives the right care every time and where care is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable. For more information, visit www.qipa.org/pa.

PHCA is a statewide advocacy organization for Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable older residents. Members comprise for-profit, nonprofit and government providers. PHCA, along with its sister agency, the Center for Assisted Living Management, represents more than 300 long-term care and senior service providers that care for almost 60,000 elderly and disabled individuals. For more information, visit www.phca.org.

PANPHA is an association of Pennsylvania nonprofit senior services with over 360 members across the state offering the entire continuum of care and services for older persons or younger adults living with disabilities. PANPHA members serve more than 65,000 persons in facility-based settings and tens of thousands more in their own homes or other community settings. For more information, visit www.panpha.org.

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