

Quality Initiatives in Long Term Care – Driving the AHCA/NCAL Agenda

AHCA/NCAL has set forth an ambitious set of strategic goals, which includes working to encourage a stable financing system that enhances quality long term care; an oversight system that is fair, consistent and rewards quality; and a workforce that meets the growing needs of our profession and the Nation. As an organization that has been advocating for the long term care profession for more than 50 years, we recognize that these will be hard-fought battles to achieve complete victory.

AHCA/NCAL has been working to change the debate regarding long term care to focus on quality – quality of life for patients, residents and staff; and quality of care for the one million frail, elderly and disabled individuals who require long term care services. Congress and the Administration have recognized that quality plays a critical role in long term care and AHCA/NCAL is leading the way in this fight. We continue to move forward with AHCA demonstrating its leadership as a founding partner in the *Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes* campaign and NCAL continuing its distinct role on the Board of Directors of the *Center for Excellence in Assisted Living*. The AHCA/NCAL Quality Awards program also continues to gain recognition and support by policy makers and the public-at-large, which furthers the entire profession's drive for quality long term care and services.

***Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes* campaign:**

AHCA is a founding partner of the *Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes* campaign – a coordinated initiative among providers, caregivers, consumers, government and others that promotes quality around eight measurable goals. To date 6,275 providers – nearly 40 percent of all nursing homes nationwide – are already participating in the campaign and actively pursuing three selected clinical quality and operational goals. This campaign takes a step further than previous initiatives – it not only measures outcomes, but it establishes numerical targets and benchmarks. AHCA and our State Affiliates are promoting the campaign having produced two toolkits to assist facilities as they participate in this important program. For more information on *Advancing Excellence*, please visit www.nhqualitycampaign.com.

Center for Excellence in Assisted Living:

The Center for Excellence in Assisted Living (CEAL) is a collaboration of eleven national organizations which aims to promote high quality assisted living and serve as an objective national clearinghouse and convener for research, practices, and policies that foster quality and affordability in assisted living. Among its many objectives, the CEAL also promotes the development and dissemination of assisted living best practices, protocols to address problem areas and performance measures – including quality of life, functional outcomes, and customer and staff satisfaction. For more information, please visit www.theceal.org.

Quality First:

In 2002, the AHCA/NCAL, the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care and the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging launched Quality First with support from then-Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson and AARP. In the ensuing years, nearly 6,500 AHCA/NCAL members have pledged their commitment to ensuring quality long term care services that maintain and foster the trust of the American public. Quality First established seven core principles that reflect long term care providers' commitment to continuous quality improvement, leadership and transparency.

CMS Acting Administrator Leslie Norwalk commented on the Quality First initiative in a May 2007, *Provider* magazine article. She stated that, "Nursing home providers have been on the leading edge of this quality movement. Long before hospitals, doctors, home health providers, dialysis facilities and others came to the table, the nursing home industry was out front with Quality First – a volunteer effort to elevate quality and accountability."

AHCA/NCAL Quality Awards program:

The AHCA/NCAL Quality Awards program is an important part of our efforts to encourage even greater quality improvement by giving recognition and support to those providers in the profession who prove each day that stable funding and a well-trained workforce leads to more quality long term care and services for the most vulnerable among us. The criteria for recognition of this three-tiered awards program is based upon the national Baldrige Award criteria and is judged by an independent Board of Overseers. Facilities that are recognized have adopted processes and models that enhance quality of care and quality of life for the patients and residents in America's nursing homes, assisted living residences and facilities providing care and services to persons with developmental disabilities.

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American Health Care Association ♦ National Center for Assisted Living

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