Excerpt from:

**CMS 2012 Nursing Home Action Plan**

Action Plan for Further Improvement of Nursing Home Quality

**3. Promote Quality Improvement**

**D. Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Initiative Overview**

The CMS has undertaken a bold initiative to broaden quality activities in nursing homes. The Provisions set forth at section 1128I (c) of the Social Security Act, as added by Section 6102 of the Affordable Act provide the opportunity for CMS to mobilize some of the best practices in nursing home quality and to identify technical assistance needs in advance of a new quality assurance performance improvement (QAPI) regulation. The provision states that the Secretary (delegated to CMS) shall establish and implement a QAPI program for facilities that includes development of standards (regulations) and provision of technical assistance on the development of best practices in order to meet regulation standards. This new provision significantly expands the level and scope of required activities currently described in the existing Quality Assessment and Assurance (QAA) provision at 42 CFR, Part 483.75(o), to ensure that facilities continuously identify and correct quality deficiencies as well as promote and sustain performance improvement.

**Results**

With the passing of the Affordable Care Act, CMS embarked on a twenty-month mission to develop a QAPI program by December 31, 2011. During the demonstration phase, CMS and its contractors:

• Reviewed existing tools that are available to help manage QAPI processes in nursing homes

• Established a Technical Expert Panel (TEP) to assist CMS contractors in developing and applying a QAPI prototype based on existing literature and practice

• Launched a demonstration project in September 2011 in 17 homes across four states to test implementation strategies and effectiveness of QAPI tools and resources

• Engaged stakeholders in a dialogue around dissemination strategies for national rollout. These active discussions continue on a frequent basis with multiple stakeholders from around the country)

• Appointed onsite technical assistance liaisons to visit each nursing home in the demonstration and provide them with individualized technical assistance.

• Approved curricula for learning collaboratives, a forum for information exchange among the demonstration homes that is facilitated by the liaisons. This support group during implementation provides feedback to CMS on the effectiveness of the materials that have been developed and leads to ongoing revisions and improvement to the tools and resources as needed.

CMS is pleased to report that the national QAPI rollout is currently underway and advancing. QAPI tools, resources, and technical assistance currently being tested in the demonstration will be available to all nursing homes by Summer 2012. Developed materials will assist nursing homes in improving their current quality programs using best practices and local learning collaboratives.

**Moving Ahead – What Stakeholders can expect in 2012:**

**QAPI Questionnaire**

In addition to the National rollout, CMS will distribute a 20-minute questionnaire to a representative sample of 4,200 randomly selected nursing homes in May, 2012. The results of this questionnaire will be used to establish a baseline of QAPI practices in nursing homes, gather information on the challenges and barriers to implementing effective QAPI programs, and help shape the direction and content of the QAPI tools and resources provided by CMS to all nursing homes.

**Technical Assistance Available on QAPI Website**

Beginning in July 2012, all stakeholders, including nursing home providers, residents, advocates and regulators will have access to an on-line resource library and website that contains information detailing each group’s essential role in this transformative initiative. The on-line library provides resources and training materials that will facilitate stakeholders’ understanding and implementation of QAPI, including:

**QAPI Tools**

• Extant Tools— these best practice or evidence-based tools came from organizations such as the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and select QIOs and may be applied to the nursing home QAPI process

• Process Tools— these are tools that teach or support fundamentals of performance improvement and are the backbone of CMS’ initiative to help nursing homes establish an effective QAPI program

• Topic Tools—these tools relate to specific areas or topics in quality improvement.

**QAPI Resources**

• Easily accessible, user-friendly on-line resource library that houses QAPI tools, case studies, and six self-study modules: Getting Started: an Introduction to QAPI, and five learning modules that map to fundamental QAPI principles

• *QAPI at a Glanc*e, which can be used as a as a quick reference that helps nursing homes integrate all the components of QAPI and proceed effectively to program implementation.

**QAPI Rule**

Underscoring both the opportunity and importance of this initiative, 1128I (c) of the Social Security Act requires CMS to promulgate a new QAPI regulation. CMS plans to release a Notice of Proposed Rule Making in 2013.

**2012 Action Plan**

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| Action Plan | Date |
| Establish an on-line resource library and with tools and technical assistance geared towards helping facilities to upgrade their current QAPI programs | Completed |
| Conduct a demonstration of a new QAPI system in 17 volunteer nursing homes, along with a technical assistance/training | Fall 2011-2013 |

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