

CMS Tools for Nursing Home Quality Improvement



NURSING HOMES

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has numerous quality improvement tools, resources, and materials for improving quality of life and quality of care and services delivered in nursing homes. This document provides an overview of key resources for implementing a QAPI program, as well as important change packages and toolkits.

QAPI

QAPI takes a systematic, comprehensive, and data-driven approach to maintaining and improving safety and quality in nursing homes while involving all nursing home caregivers in practical and creative problem solving.

CMS developed a general framework for QAPI based on **five key elements** of effective quality management.

This document outlines the QAPI five elements, their corresponding goals, and tools created by CMS in collaboration with the University of Minnesota and Stratis Health, subject matter experts, consumer groups, and nursing home stakeholders.

Element 1

Design and Scope

A QAPI program must be ongoing and comprehensive, dealing with the full range of services offered by the facility, including the full range of departments. When fully implemented, the QAPI program should address all systems of care and management practices, and should always include clinical care, quality of life, and resident choice. It aims for safety and high quality with all clinical interventions while emphasizing autonomy and choice in daily life for residents (or resident's agents). It utilizes the best available evidence to define and measure goals. Nursing homes will have in place a written QAPI plan adhering to these principles.

Goals	Tools
Learn the basics of QAPI <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review QAPI five elementsUnderstand how QAPI coordinates with QAA	QAPI Five Elements QAPI at a Glance QAPI News Brief - Volume 1
Assess QAPI in your organization	QAPI Self-Assessment Tool
Create a structure and plan to support QAPI	Guide to Developing Purpose, Guiding Principles and Scope for QAPI Guide for Developing a QAPI Plan

Element 2

Governance and Leadership

The governing body and/or administration of the nursing home develops a culture that involves leadership seeking input from facility staff, residents, and their families and/or representatives. The governing body assures adequate resources exist to conduct QAPI efforts. This includes designating one or more persons to be accountable for QAPI; developing leadership and facility-wide training on QAPI; and ensuring staff time, equipment, and technical training as needed. The Governing Body should foster a culture where QAPI is a priority by ensuring that policies are developed to sustain QAPI despite changes in personnel and turnover. Their responsibilities include, setting expectations around safety, quality, rights, choice, and respect by balancing safety with resident-centered rights and choice. The governing body ensures staff accountability, while creating an atmosphere where staff is comfortable identifying and reporting quality problems as well as opportunities for improvement.

Goals	Tools
Understand the QAPI business case	CMS Video: Nursing Home QAPI – What’s in it for you?
Promote a fair and open culture where staff are comfortable identifying quality problems and opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your current culture • Assess your individual skills, practice, attitude • Create a learning organization that drives and reinforces a process for organizational change • Distinguish between human error, at risk, and reckless behavior, and respond differently/ appropriately to each 	QAPI at a Glance QAPI News Brief - Volume 1
Create a culture that embraces the principles of QAPI	QAPI at a Glance QAPI News Brief - Volume 1 QAPI Leadership Rounding Tool
Promote engagement and commitment of staff, residents and families in QAPI	QAPI at a Glance QAPI News Brief - Volume 1 Examples of Performance Objectives for Job Descriptions and Performance Reviews
Involve residents and families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the customer needs and expectations 	QAPI at a Glance QAPI News Brief - Volume 1

Element 3

Feedback, Data Systems and Monitoring

The facility puts systems in place to monitor care and services, drawing data from multiple sources. Feedback systems actively incorporate input from staff, residents, families, and others as appropriate. This element includes using Performance Indicators to monitor a wide range of care processes and outcomes, and reviewing findings against benchmarks and/or targets the facility has established for performance. It also includes tracking, investigating, and monitoring Adverse Events that must be investigated every time they occur, and action plans implemented to prevent recurrences.

Goals	Tools
Use and make data meaningful <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what you need to monitor • Collect, track, and monitor measures/indicators • Set goals, benchmarks, thresholds • Identify gaps and opportunities • Prioritize what you will work to improve • Use data to drive decisions 	Measure/Indicator Development Worksheet Measure/Indicator Collection and Monitoring Plan Instructions to Develop a Dashboard Goal Setting Worksheet Prioritization Worksheet for Performance Improvement Projects

Element 4

Performance Improvement Projects (PIPs)

A Performance Improvement Project (PIP) is a concentrated effort on a particular problem in one area of the facility or facility wide; it involves gathering information systematically to clarify issues or problems, and intervening for improvements. The facility conducts PIPs to examine and improve care or services in areas that the facility identifies as needing attention. Areas that need attention will vary depending on the type of facility and the unique scope of services they provide.

Goals	Tools
Implement performance improvement projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on topics that are meaningful and address the needs of residents and staff Charter PIP teams Support staff in being effective PIP team members. Use tools that support effective teamwork. Plan, implement, measure, monitor, and document changes, using a structured PI approach 	Worksheet to Create a PIP Charter PIP Launch Checklist: Helpful hints for project leaders, managers, and coordinators Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle Template PIP Inventory Sustainability Decision Guide Brainstorming, Affinity Grouping, and Multi-Voting Tool
Enhance QAPI communications	QAPI at a Glance Communications Plan Worksheet Storyboard Guide for PIPs Improvement Success Story Template

Element 5

Systematic Analysis and Systemic Action

The facility uses a systematic approach to determine when in-depth analysis is needed to fully understand the problem, its causes, and implications of a change. The facility uses a thorough and highly organized/ structured approach to determine whether and how identified problems may be caused or exacerbated by the way care and services are organized or delivered. Additionally, facilities will be expected to develop policies and procedures and demonstrate proficiency in the use of Root Cause Analysis. Systemic Actions look comprehensively across all involved systems to prevent future events and promote sustained improvement. This element includes a focus on continual learning and continuous improvement.

QAPI Five Elements	Goals	Tools
Element 5 – Systematic Analysis and Systemic Action	Understand and focus on organizational processes and systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model and promote systems thinking Practice RCA – get to the root of problems Take action at the systems- level 	Guidance for Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA) Guidance for Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Flowcharting Five Whys Fishbone Diagram

Change Packages & Toolkits

CMS has prepared multiple toolkits and change packages for nursing homes. Each includes an overview of the materials included and the benefits anticipated in using the tools and resources contained within.

Change Packages	Goals
Foundational Change Package Introduced the overall concept of how to implement change (2012, updated 2017)	Identify seven (7) core strategies, change concepts and actionable items to achieve excellence.
All Cause Harm Prevention in Nursing Homes Change Package (2018)	Prevent harm (adverse events, abuse, and neglect) for nursing home residents; Covers a wide range of strategies and actions to promote resident safety.

Toolkits	Goals
Nursing Home Staff Competency (2018)	To help nursing home frontline and management staff evaluate skills, identify where the nursing home is doing well and where the facility might need support.
Nursing Home Employee Satisfaction Survey – Feb 2019: Paper and Digital	Designed to help a nursing home to recruit, motivate and retain staff that are critical to better resident health and quality of life. This free, anonymous survey offers employees an opportunity to share their perceptions about the nursing home workplace. Survey topics include: employee engagement and team building, job satisfaction, management and leadership, scheduling and staffing and training.
Guide to Improving Staff Satisfaction Toolkit – Nov 2019	Aids nursing home teams in reducing adverse events, improving staffing quality and improving dementia care. A repository of evidence-based approaches, solutions and interventions to address challenging areas discovered through the Nursing Home Employee Satisfaction Survey.
Developing a Restful Environment Action Manual (DREAM) Toolkit 2020	The DREAM Toolkit provides educational material and practical tools for nursing home staff to help all residents living with dementia improve sleep quality. Nursing homes can choose from a variety of strategies in the DREAM Toolkit to help improve quality of life and quality of care, especially for residents living with dementia.
Head to Toe Infection Prevention (H2T) Toolkit	Infections comprise a large share of adverse events in nursing homes. The Head to Toe Infection Prevention Toolkit contains educational materials and practical tools to support the clinical team in providing person-centered care that helps prevent and control common infections like pneumonia, skin infections, and urinary tract infections. The Toolkit aims to educate licensed nurses and nurse aides on infection prevention practices and provides seven tools that can be integrated into their daily work.