QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: TWO WAYS TO BENEFIT FROM ACTIONABLE DATA
This is an important time for senior living and long term care providers. With increased regulatory mandates and the threat of shrinking reimbursement revenue, quality measurement—combined with comparative benchmarking—is one investment that is helping providers prepare for the future, gain peace of mind, and establish value in what is rapidly becoming a quality-focused health care landscape.

Customer-centric care, a term that advocates an all-inclusive cross-continuum view of health care participants and stakeholders, is quickly gaining traction. Customer-centric care extends the
principles of patient-centered care to include residents, families, caregivers and employees, physicians, post-acute agencies and programs, hospitals, managed care organizations, medical groups, and many other stakeholders. And, focusing on the important populations in long term care (residents, families, and employees) is the best place for skilled nursing care centers and assisted living communities to start.

1. Improve resident and family satisfaction.

Research from My InnerView, a product of National Research Corporation, suggests that the highest satisfaction rates accrue to facilities that perform better in organizational key performance indicators such as staff stability, staff retention, resident-centered culture, and more.

These types of results are only evident through quality measurement over time and benchmark analysis, the latter having proved to be an integral component of any quality improvement effort. Implementing a quality improvement initiative that extends beyond surveys and reporting to include benchmark results should be a focal point of your customer satisfaction measurement. At the end of the day, your resident and family quality improvement initiative should help your organization to:

- **Think outside the silo.** Health care models continue to evolve with increased focus on cross-continuum delivery and smoother care transitions. You need customer feedback that extends the patient-centered care approach to incorporate perspectives of the entire care experience. This establishes value in the minds of potential health care partners such as hospitals, accountable care organizations (ACOs), and managed care organizations that already understand that health care silos will continue to consolidate and performance data will play a more critical role in everything from payment policy to care transitions.

- **Take action to achieve improvement.** Access to performance improvement models and tools should be part of any quality measurement initiative. Built on best practices, prescriptive road maps and processes—based on valid benchmark trends—empower skilled nursing and assisted living organizations to achieve remarkable results. You gain focus and efficiency by concentrating your efforts to improve the areas that matter most.

2. Improve staff stability.

No aspect is more important to providing quality care than employee engagement. Beyond the excessive dollar cost, caregiver and staff turnover brings additional costs that come in other critical forms. Responsiveness to resident needs and preferences, consistency of the resident experience, and perception among family members are only a few key examples.

The loyalty of your workforce is strongly predictive of overall quality and outcomes. Plus, comparative benchmark reporting and valid levels of participation are just as important when considering employee engagement programs.
for your quality improvement initiative. The objectives for successful employee engagement should help your organization to:

- **Drive positive organizational change.** After your survey data are collected and reported to you, it’s critical that your quality measurement vendor works with you to create an empowered plan of action to promote high participation and high adoption of improvement programs, easily identify strengths and areas for improvement, and initiate a virtuous cycle of action and evaluation.

- **Support your staff’s desire to make a difference.** Research in employee commitment and loyalty shows that work environment influences dedication. What’s more, the staff’s ability to provide quality care directly affects their loyalty. Your employees want to make a difference. Your quality measurement vendor should help you study work environment factors such as relationships with peers, investment by managers, and overall job satisfaction to build on your staff’s inherent willingness to succeed.

- **Gain an enterprise-wide view of culture.** For the growing number of senior service providers whose enterprises are diversifying across the continuum, employee engagement solutions that address the need for greater performance consistency and smoother care transitions are defining a new frontier. Using compatible survey content to measure and promote employee engagement pertinent to traditional long term and home care, ambulatory, acute, and post-acute settings enables the creation of an enterprise-wide view of your workplace and customer-centric cultures.

### BECOME A MORE DESIRABLE PARTNER

Simply showing potential referral partners, such as hospitals, managed care organizations, and ACOs, that you are measuring quality is a step in the right direction. However, demonstrating that your organization is knowledgeable about where you stand nationally, implementing data-driven quality improvement programs, and proactively helping your organization adapt to culture change is something that providers, payers, and ACOs are looking for in referral partners.

National Research Corporation resident experience and employee engagement programs, also known as My InnerView products, can help resident care communities achieve these two important quality initiatives. You’ll measure and benchmark key factors that impact improvement and implement strategic quality improvement plans that move the needle. Plus, you’ll participate in a national database that helps the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living with advocacy efforts.

Finally, you’ll gain a partner with a unique depth of expertise and knowledge that empowers customer-centric health care across the continuum.

To gain a better understanding of how benchmarking and participation in the national database benefit the profession, visit our website (www.nationalresearch.com) starting October 8 to download the new 2011-2012 National Research Reports for skilled nursing care centers and assisted living communities.

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