

Long-Term Quality Alliance

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NEW ALLIANCE LAUNCHED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CONSUMERS OF LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Long-Term Quality Alliance Will Focus on Measuring and Improving Care Across Settings To Achieve More Effective and Efficient Long-Term Care Experiences

Washington D.C. – A group of the nation’s leading health, consumer, and aging advocates has formed a new alliance to make sure that the 10 million people needing long-term services and supports in the United States receive the highest quality of care regardless of the setting in which it is delivered. The Long-Term Quality Alliance (LTQA) aims to broaden efforts to improve quality of care to include community-based settings as well as nursing homes. It will do so by fostering “person-centered” quality measures for people who need long-term services and supports to enhance their quality of life, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and utilizations, and decrease costs.

“The way we currently measure the quality of long-term care in this country focuses too much on clinical services delivered in nursing homes. The perspectives of consumers and their family caregivers have largely been ignored,” says Alliance Chair Mary Naylor, PhD, RN, Marion S. Ware Professor in Gerontology at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Nursing. “In this rapidly changing long-term care environment, we need to advance a set of measures that reflect what is important to consumers and apply those across all settings. Providers also need access to best practices that will improve the quality of their services,” says Naylor, who announced the new Alliance today at a Washington, D.C., briefing on long-term care sponsored by the policy journal, *Health Affairs*.

The LTQA Board is comprised of 29 leaders from organizations representing caregivers, consumers, quality improvement, nursing homes, accreditation, aging issues, foundations, the federal government, private payers, and academia (*see attached list*). The group, which includes former Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Mark McClellan, MD, PhD, and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Director Carolyn Clancy, MD, was formed to respond to the increasing demand for long-term care and the expanding field of providers who are delivering that care, including in home- and community-based settings such as assisted living facilities and adult day care.

“Although long-term services and supports have a major impact on health, health costs, and quality of life for millions of frail and chronically ill people, efforts to improve the quality and value of this sector, especially outside of the institutional setting, have been absent from the national

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health care debate,” says Naylor. “We have seen great progress on improving nursing home care but such advances have not been matched across the broad spectrum of long-term care,” she adds.

The Alliance will focus initially on two important health care issues that have been identified as national health priorities – how to improve care coordination or transitions in care and how to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions among frail and chronically ill people. Naylor says that these two areas offer the greatest promise for improving quality, consumer experiences, and efficiency, as well as reducing costs.

The Alliance’s key priorities will include:

- Identifying which performance measures and evidence-based practices offer the most promise for assessing and improving quality of care and quality of life for people receiving long-term care;
- Recommending ways to apply available measurement and performance improvement strategies in high-priority areas such as care coordination more consistently and appropriately in a wider range of clinical and community settings;
- Proposing ways to build on, reinforce, and create momentum for other quality initiatives currently underway; and
- Achieving tangible improvements in care through pilots, demonstrations, technical collaboration and other efforts.

The group will hold its first formal meeting on January 28 at the Brookings Institution and will operate as a membership organization. The group’s members will be critical to the process and serve as strategic partners working to help solve the problems confronting the health care system. Members will help identify the most relevant quality benchmarks as well as have access to evidence-based practice tools and lessons learned from pilots and demonstrations.

“What makes this effort unique is the fact that such a diverse group of stakeholders has never come together to place the spotlight on long-term services and supports across all care settings, with a primary focus on quality of life for the people served,” says McClellan, now director of the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at the Brookings Institution. “The work of the Alliance will lay the foundation for better treatment choices, payment and benefit reforms, and other initiatives that support improvements in long-term care performance and better care overall.”

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