



**Center for Clinical Standards and Quality/Survey & Certification Group**

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**Admin Info: 13-03-NH**

**DATE:** November 2, 2012

**TO:** State Survey Agency Directors

**FROM:** Director  
Survey and Certification Group

**SUBJECT:** Program Review of Long Term Care Survey Effectiveness – Soliciting State Agencies (SA) and Regional Offices (RO) Feedback on the LTC Survey Process

**Memorandum Summary**

- **Technical Expert Program Review** – The Division of Nursing Homes is seeking expert input and ideas from State Survey Agency Directors and Managers (including survey team leaders) as well as from Regional Office staff for the program review of the federal nursing home survey process.
- **Long Term Care Survey Process Effectiveness** – The purpose of the program review is to identify opportunities for enhancing effectiveness of the annual nursing home survey, focusing initially on work conducted during the onsite portion of the survey process.
- **Kick-Off Meeting:** A kick-off meeting was held on August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> in Baltimore, MD with front line nursing home surveyors. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is now seeking SA and RO perspectives on the survey process, as well as an opportunity to respond to the findings of the August meeting. We will also be seeking input from nursing home providers, advocates and other stakeholders.
- **Contact:** Please send the names and contact information for potential participants to Sharon Lash at [sharon.lash@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:sharon.lash@cms.hhs.gov) by COB Friday November 9, 2012.

**Why This Program Review?**

The CMS continuously monitors national and State survey information to identify opportunities for improvement in the survey process. In reviewing recent data from States and regions with respect to time on survey and deficiency citations, we note two significant patterns: 1) the time on survey has increased in both Quality Indicator Survey (QIS) and Traditional Survey states over the past several years and 2) this most recent increase in time on survey does not appear to be associated with more deficiency citations for facilities with similar characteristics/survey histories.

A CMS contractor, Abt Associates, convened an expert panel of front line state surveyors on August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> in Baltimore, Maryland. This kick-off meeting provided CMS with candid feedback on both the Traditional as well as the QIS survey methodologies. The final report from the August meeting is now in the clearance process and will be shared with SA Directors and ROs within the next few weeks. CMS would like to invite input from State Survey Agency Directors or their representatives, as well as CMS Regional Offices.

We are in the process of scheduling a number of thirty to forty-five minute teleconferences in November. These calls will provide an opportunity for survey agency directors and managers to discuss issues related to survey agency operations, including topics such as onsite processes, scheduling, travel, off-site preparation, determination of scope and severity, documentation and others. We plan to conduct conference calls with regional office surveyors and leadership to solicit additional input and review the Abt report in November as well.

We expect that feedback from all of these workgroups will inform a number of small pilots in which CMS will test changes to the survey process in certain states. We anticipate beginning these pilots in early CY2013, and will communicate more information on how interested States may engage with CMS around pilot activity in the near future.

If your State agency would like to participate on one of the November conference calls, please email the names and contact information for potential participants to Sharon Lash at [Sharon.Lash@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Sharon.Lash@cms.hhs.gov) by COB Friday November 9, 2012. If your regional office would like to participate in one of the RO calls, please forward contact information for interested participants to Sharon Lash as well.

Thank you very much for referring leaders and managers to us for this vital initiative. We look forward to working with you over the coming months.

**Effective Date:** Immediately. Please communicate this invitation to the appropriate State and RO staff.

/s/

Thomas E. Hamilton

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management