

Project Title: **DEVELOPMENT OF STAFFING QUALITY MEASURES – PHASE I (SQM)**

Lead Component: OCSQ/QMHAG/DAPAC

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Period of Performance: September 2003- July 2005

Description

The overall goal of this project is to develop measures of nursing home staffing that can appropriately be used as measures of quality for public reporting. The current project represents phase I of development efforts and is funded for 22 months. Specific tasks of this phase of the project are: 1) the review of relevant studies to gain an understanding of the “state of the art” in measurement of staffing in nursing homes; 2) seeking of expert consultation utilizing a panel of recognized leaders in this field; 3) determination of the aspects of staffing that matter to stakeholders; 4) investigation of options for collection of the relevant staffing data; 5) acquisition of relevant staffing data and building of a research data file; and 6) construction of a draft measure or measures. The study will build on and expand prior work by investigating a range of nursing home staffing measures beyond basic staffing levels. An anticipated second phase of the project will consist of validation of draft measures and a consideration of appropriate case-mix and/or risk adjustment. *Upon completion of the project, CMS will consider staffing data set and quality measure construction recommendations.*

Background

In the fall of 2003, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contracted with the Colorado Foundation for Medical Care (CFMC) to develop a set of measures of staffing in nursing homes that could appropriately be used as measures of quality in a public reporting system. The University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Abt Associates, and the University of Missouri School of Nursing are working with CFMC in this effort. The Development of Staffing Quality Measures – Phase I (SQM) project was designed in response to the findings of reports that identified a range of serious problems in nursing homes and implicated inadequate staffing as a potential cause of many of the problems observed. It also addresses a formal recommendation by the National Quality Forum (NQF) Board of Directors for inclusion of a staffing quality measure in the set of nursing home quality measures being publicly reported. The project builds on and expands previous CMS work on staffing issues (described in the 2001 report “Appropriateness of Minimum Nurse Staffing Ratios in Nursing Homes, Phase II”) by investigating a range of nursing home staffing measures beyond the currently reported hours of care and assessing options for collection of relevant staffing data.

The SQM work began with a comprehensive literature review focusing on methods used to measure staffing and workforce issues. Upon completion of the literature review, representatives from national health care associations, consumer advocacy groups, and nursing home corporations identified which aspects of nursing home staffing were most important to them, and voiced their concerns regarding the accuracy and usefulness of any measure used for public reporting at a stakeholder meeting in March 2004. Members of the technical expert panel (TEP) also attended the stakeholder session in order to have first-hand information to inform subsequent TEP discussions. The TEP met separately to review issues raised at the stakeholder

meeting and to discuss the project work. This meeting resulted in a list of specific quality measures and data sources for further study.

Since the Online Survey and Certification and Reporting System (OSCAR) data files and Medicaid cost reports have significant limitations, particularly in view of some of the measures being considered, the TEP considered alternative sources for these data. A decision was reached to use nursing home payroll records in the measurement development efforts. The project analytic team recruited nursing facilities to share payroll data. The database has been constructed and documented. The analytic team has also reviewed and cleaned the data in preparation for formal measure development efforts.

Current Project Efforts

Current project efforts are focused on construction of measures of staffing that can be supported by the payroll database. These include, but are not limited to:

- measures of turnover of key staff (including registered nurses (RN), licensed practical /vocational nurses (LPN, LVN), certified nursing assistants (CNA), Director of Nursing (DON), and facility Administrator),
- measures of retention of key staff (including RNs, licensed staff (RNs + LPNs/LVNs), CNAs)
- measures of staff tenure (including the Director of Nursing, the Administrator of the facility, RNs, licensed staff (RNs + LPNs/LVNs), CNAs)
- refined measures of the number of hours of care per resident per day by each category of staff.

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