

Nursing Home Consumer Choice Campaign Needs Assessment Report—Final Report

Purpose: The purpose of the Consumer Choice Campaign for Quality Care is to provide consumers with information about the performance of nursing homes in order to help them make better-informed decisions when choosing a nursing home. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has proposed a list of nursing home performance measures drawn from the Minimum Data Set (MDS) to be publicly reported for the campaign. A needs assessment was conducted, consisting of: 1) a review of available literature on nursing home performance measures; 2) nine focus groups with family caregivers, doctors, and discharge planners; and 3) thirty-eight interviews with key informants from community organizations, Quality Improvement organizations, hospital discharge planners, nursing home associations, and other stakeholders. The purpose of this research was to identify the campaign's target audience and map the audience's decision-making environment to ultimately understand their motivations for using nursing home quality information and to determine how CMS can motivate them to use this quality information to make better-informed decisions when choosing a nursing home.

Results: Findings from this research are summarized below:

I. Key Findings:

- The primary audience for the nursing home performance information is family caregivers.
- Consumers view quality differently from CMS's proposed clinical performance measures.
 - Most caregivers evaluate nursing homes on the basis of cleanliness, caring and staffing, at times taking the quality of clinical care for granted.
- Consumers are not likely to use clinical quality indicators in isolation to make decisions.
 - They also factor in information about cost, services, location, and availability as well as their own perceptions of quality.
- CMS's proposed performance measures may be perceived by consumers as negative and frightening.

- Most caregivers do not seek out information about nursing home information until a health crisis occurs, because of the guilt and stigma associated with placing their loved ones in nursing homes.
 - Other factors that discourage caregivers from seeking out nursing home information include:
 - Perceived lack of nursing home choice
 - Family pressure and conflict
 - An overwhelming decision-making process
- Key caregiver influencers include hospital discharge planners, physicians, consumer groups and community organizations, and the media.
- Doctors and discharge planners are willing to refer consumers to information about nursing home performance, but are concerned about the liability in recommending specific facilities.
 - Additionally, due to heavy caseloads, doctors and discharge planners often face time constraints in counseling caregivers and patients.

II. Opportunities

- There is caregiver demand for nursing home quality information as well as the motivation to use it.
 - Caregivers are highly concerned about the quality of care in nursing homes, and family caregivers want to ensure that they choose the best facility for their loved one.
- Caregivers, if placing a loved one in a nursing home directly from a hospital, can be an easily-identifiable and easily-located target audience because of the likelihood that they will interface with hospital discharge planners.
- Hospital discharge planners and physicians are willing intermediaries for nursing home quality information, even if limited in certain capacities.

III. Barriers and Challenges

- There is a disconnect between CMS's proposed performance measures and consumer perceptions of nursing home quality.
- Caregivers may have negative associations with proposed performance measures.

- The “problem-focus” of performance measures may create an adversarial relationship with providers and the nursing home industry as well as raise concerns about increased litigation against nursing homes.
- Campaign efforts may overlap with state and private efforts to provide nursing home information.
- There are concerns about reliability of MDS data and the proposed performance measures among physicians, discharge planners, and to some extent, the nursing home industry.
- Many consumers have limited or no choice of nursing homes due to factors such as cost, location, and availability.
 - Therefore, for some members of the target audience, the use of quality information to select a nursing home would not be relevant.