



Updated Priorities
February 1st, 2023

Committee #5 | Quality Assurance

The following document has been revised based on community feedback and ongoing committee discussion.

The document is broken down into two parts: an executive summary and the original, detailed committee submission. Since original committee submissions often contain technical references, we've provided the executive summary for broader understanding of the priority recommendation.

Executive Summary

The ability to conduct nursing home surveys efficiently and comprehensively is vital to making sure nursing home residents receive safe, high-quality care and live life with dignity. Currently, across the country, state survey processes are not able to fully achieve that vital mission. Moreover, the survey process, as currently practiced, does not fully assess or promote the person-centeredness of the care residents receive. This committee has come together to address these issues.

Short-Term Priority

Test and evaluate strategies that make nursing home quality assurance efforts more effective, efficient, and responsive and that are not only consistent with but that can facilitate person-centered care in nursing homes through state demonstration projects.

Long-Term Priority

Develop, test and promote tools and best practices to improve survey capacity and efficiency.



NASEM Report Recommendation(s)

Goal 5: *Design a more effective and responsive system of quality assurance*

5B: *The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) should develop and evaluate strategies (including the evaluation of potential unintended consequences) that make nursing home quality assurance efforts more effective, efficient, and responsive, including potential longer-term reforms.*

Detailed Committee #4 Submission

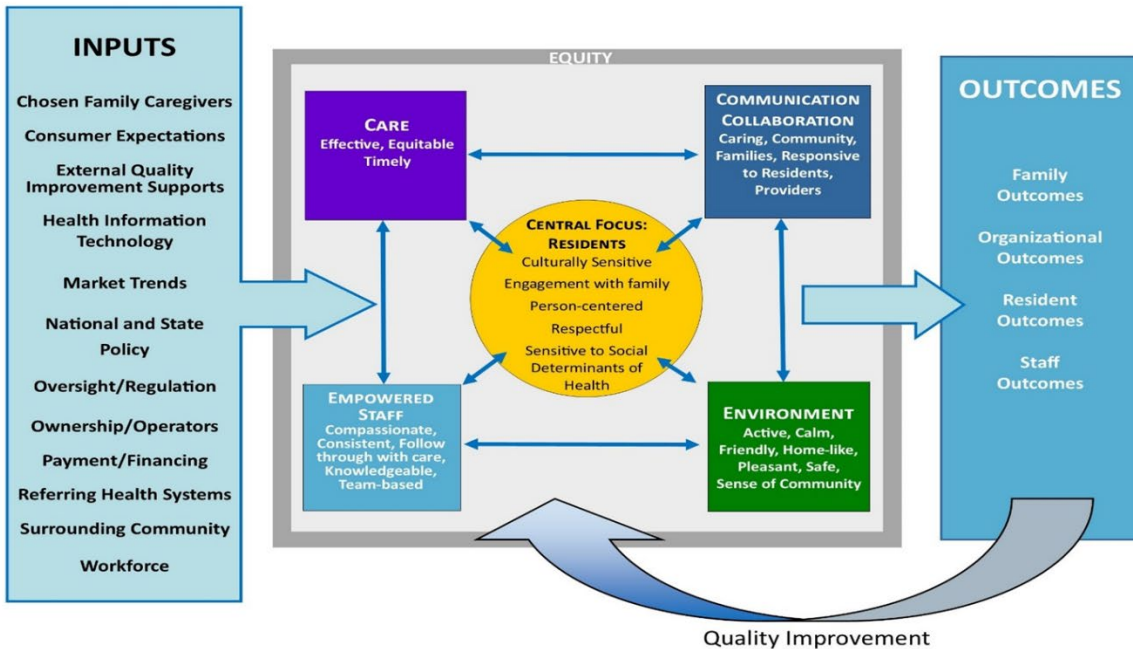
Introduction

Many possible strategies could be developed, implemented, and tested to make nursing home quality assurance efforts more effective, efficient, and responsive. Though the report noted that there is limited evidence linking enforcement and quality, it proposed using enhanced data monitoring to target oversight resources more effectively to higher and lower performing nursing homes and using/evaluating a broader array of enforcement remedies and corrective actions to address facility noncompliance. Stakeholders have also pointed out that there is a gap between quality assurance and quality improvement processes.

Underlying the Committee's decision to focus on NASEM recommendation 5B was a strong sense that innovation and change are needed to bolster the ability of quality oversight efforts to address quality challenges in the nursing home sector more effectively. For too long, despite the existence of detailed care standards, some gaps and limitations in nursing home oversight have persisted.

Another strong belief among the committee was that innovations in quality oversight should keep the resident – *and person-centered care* – at the core.

The following graph from the NASEM report provides their conceptual model of nursing home quality. As noted on the right side and the arrow below, outcomes and continuous quality improvement are crucial components of quality nursing homes that focus on the center of the yellow circle: **Person-Centeredness**.



In thinking about the scope and design of demonstration projects to achieve these objectives, the Committee is motivated by a desire to engage multiple stakeholders both to address quality deficiencies and to lay the groundwork for fundamental change. In addition to engaging CMS and state survey and licensure agencies, these efforts should include LTC Ombudsman, quality improvement professionals, clinicians, and residents and families. As we continue to hear from our community, quality assurance has to be collaborative: an ongoing project in which both the nursing home itself and residents and their care partners have a voice. For instance, some on the Committee feel it is vitally important to test and try new ways to evaluate nursing homes through a learning collaborative that emphasizes quality improvement and addresses root causes of problems. These dimensions would not necessarily be the domain of surveyors (who focus more narrowly on assessing and enforcing compliance with standards); however, the group felt greater harmony or communication between the tasks of quality assurance and quality improvement should occur.

Our Approach

Initiative #1

The Committee proposes conducting demonstration projects in select states to explore ways in which the survey agency's process in coordination with quality improvement organizations can help improve the delivery of person-centered care in nursing homes.

The Committee is discussing several strategies that could be implemented and tested – redesigned enforcement remedies to focus on the root causes of quality problems, bolstered attention to quality improvement potentially including Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) standards, and an increased focus on resident-centered quality measures in ongoing performance monitoring. However, the Committee also recognizes that the design and implementation of a demonstration project would depend on shared priorities and capacity to implement such a program at the state level, as well as statute-based constraints. That is, any demonstration projects will require sufficient resources and agency capacity.

The Committee envisions that nursing homes, survey agencies, quality improvement organizations, LTC Ombudsman, and other relevant stakeholders in the state would participate in this initiative.

Initiative #2 [Developed since December]

The committee has decided to focus a second effort on ways to improve the capacity and efficiency of state survey agencies in order to better hold poor performers accountable.

In November, the committee said it would explore a second initiative that looked at the backlog of nursing home surveys across states and the need for increased capacity and efficiency to hold poor performers accountable. Since then, the committee has committed to addressing these issues.

Reflecting community feedback, the committee believes that frequent, in-depth surveys are vital for holding nursing homes accountable for high-quality care. At the same time, the committee believes that a number of avenues can be explored to make the survey process more effective and efficient at

identifying poor quality care. The committee will explore designing tools, models and/or approaches that could make survey more efficient. It may also propose an additional pilot project.