Consistent Assignment (CA)
Leadership Fact Sheet
December 28, 2016

This fact sheet focuses on the goal of consistent assignment (CA).

Why is Consistent Assignment important?
Consistent assignment means that residents have consistent caregivers. The National Nursing Home Quality Improvement (NNHQI) Campaign has defined consistent assignment as ‘each resident has no more than 12 direct caregivers in a one month period.’ Long-term care facilities are increasingly using consistent assignment to improve both the quality of care and quality of work life. Active management involvement is vital for consistent assignment to be successfully implemented.

How is consistent assignment measured?
Many nursing homes use consistent assignment. However, very few actually measure the extent to which their staffing is consistent, how many caregivers are actually assigned to each resident in a month. The NNHQI Campaign has developed a tool to measure staffing consistency which will allow you to measure and track consistency of assignments in your facility. The Campaign has incorporated the feedback of participants and created a tool that is more user-friendly than the previous one.

How does consistent assignment benefit nursing homes?
- Consistent assignment leads to improvements in resident care quality.
- Consistent assignment supports the implementation of person-centered care.
- Consistent assignment allows staff to become familiar with resident routines, preferences and concerns.
- Consistent assignment supports the building of relationships between staff and residents.
- Staff/family relationship development is supported by consistent assignment.
- Consistent assignment has been linked to reductions in resident distress and behavior experienced by staff as challenging.
- Staff and residents are more likely to experience positive relationships with each other.
- Consistent assignment has been linked to improved clinical outcomes and increased resident participation in activities.
- Residents often experience enhanced choice and control with consistent assignment.
- Consistent assignment has been linked to fewer quality of care and quality of life deficiencies.
- Consistent assignment improves accuracy of care plan implementation.
- Consistent assignment supports more complete and effective information hand-off between shifts.

How can leadership support consistent assignment?
- Being clear about commitment to consistent assignment improves the chances of successful implementation.
- Administrative commitment to person centered care improves the chances of successful implementation.
- As sustaining consistent assignment is difficult when workloads are unbalanced, leadership must ensure that the method used to establish the staff/resident assignment considers work load and work difficulty.
- In order to ensure buy-in for consistent assignments, leadership should include staff in the implementation of the process and the selection of the assignments while providing ample opportunity to express concerns.
- Implementing consistent assignment can be difficult in union facilities as policies regarding seniority may need to be flexible. Leadership is vital in negotiating with unions regarding consistent assignment, clarifying the benefits for both staff and residents.