

golden
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Quality Highlights

FOURTH QUARTER 2009



Golden Living Earns 60 AHCA/NCAL National Quality Awards in 2009

Recognition Cements Golden Living's Reputation
for Industry-Leading Quality Care



Sixty Golden LivingCenters have been selected by the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) to receive AHCA/NCAL Step I and Step II Quality Awards in 2009 — more than any other long-term post-acute care company. Fifty-three LivingCenters earned Step I awards and seven LivingCenters earned the difficult-to-achieve Step II award.

To be selected for one of the independently judged awards, nursing homes must show an extraordinary ongoing commitment to quality care for their patients, as measured against specific criteria. The AHCA/NCAL Quality Awards are designed to recognize quality achievement, while supporting improvement efforts in long-term care through the promotion of education and awareness.

“Including this year’s winners, Golden Living has received a total of 241 Quality Awards since AHCA started the program in 1996, with over half of those coming in the last three years under our new ownership,” said Neil Kurtz, M.D., President and CEO of Golden Living. “This achievement is unmatched in the industry.”

“Our employees strive each day to raise the bar of quality care in each of our LivingCenters,” said Larry Deans, President of Golden LivingCenters. “The number of awards we received this year is a direct reflection of our progress in becoming a company that is synonymous with quality care.”

Golden Living Participates in CMS Payment Reform Demonstration Program

Three Golden LivingCenters are currently participating in a ground-breaking Post Acute Care Payment Reform Demonstration (PAC PRD) sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):

- Golden LivingCenter – Lumberton in Lumberton, N.C.
- Golden LivingCenter – Lexington in Lexington, Mass.
- Golden LivingCenter – Heritage Square in Greendale, Wis.

The goal of PAC PRD is to apply standardized patient assessment information from acute and post-acute care settings to guide future Medicare payment policy and test a new web-based, standardized patient assessment tool.

PAC PRD currently includes approximately 150 providers representing skilled nursing facilities, acute-care hospitals, long-term care hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation facilities and home health agencies. Each participating provider agrees to use a standardized patient assessment tool on newly

admitted Medicare patients and at the time of discharge. Providers also track resource use and outcomes associated with treatment in each type of post-acute care setting.

“Golden Living’s participation provides invaluable information for CMS to learn more about the characteristics, treatment and outcomes of the Medicare population using post-acute services and to examine the consistency of payment incentives for the Medicare population treated in various settings,” said Barbara Gage, Principal Investigator for the Medicare Payment Reform Demonstration and Director of Post-Acute Care Research at RTI International, one of the world’s leading health research institutes.

PAC PRD is expected to have a positive and much-needed impact on Medicare payment policy, patient outcomes and communication regarding patient information among acute and post-acute settings at time of discharge.

Hospice Patients Experience ‘Journey of Care’

AseraCare Hospice has developed the *Journey of Care* program to enhance hospice services and provide a beautiful and comfortable transition for patients with a life-limiting illness. The program addresses the clinical, psychosocial and educational needs of patients and families dealing with terminal illness.

Journey of Care offers a uniquely designed end-of-life care plan through a joint collaboration of hospice staff, skilled nursing facility staff, the patient, and his or her family. For example, activity visits led by hospice aides make the hospice journey more meaningful through the use of



a “comfort box,” which is given to the patient. The box is filled with books, soothing music, aromas to touch the senses, a journal to share feelings and prayer cards. Patients contribute their favorite memorabilia to the box, resulting in a keepsake for the patient and their family. A special remembrance pillow can also be created.

The *Journey of Care* program celebrates life — reassuring patients and their loved ones that even the simplest of things can be valuable to those with minimal time left to live. The *Journey of Care* program adds life to days when adding days to life may no longer be possible.

Golden Living Tests New In-House Pharmacy System

Golden Living is testing a new, fully automated in-house pharmacy system that will save money for patients and make the distribution and management of prescription medications safer. Launched at Golden LivingCenter – Frederick in Maryland, the AP PharmaSystem™ is slightly larger than an office copier machine and holds more than 170 frequently prescribed oral medications in a secure environment.

Most medications used by the LivingCenter can be dispensed directly from the machine. The machine packages oral solid medications minutes before patients need them in special tamper-evident crimp-seal envelopes with the date and time along with each resident's name and room number.

The new system allows nurses to spend less time on medication processes and more time giving personal attention to their patients. An additional advantage of the system is that because it only dispenses medication envelopes when a resident is scheduled for a dosage, residents are only billed for the medication they actually use. Standard medication programs charge residents on a month-supply basis for their prescriptions — whether or not all of the medications are used.



AP PharmaSystem allows for a constant secured inventory of medication on-site, ensuring greater medication availability for new orders and emergency needs. Since the residents are billed only for the medications they use, the bills are easier to understand and promote greater accuracy — regardless of how often medication orders are changed by the physician.

New Telehealth Technology Advances Patient Care at AseraCare Home Health

AseraCare Home Health is testing the latest telehealth technology in a pilot program at three of its agencies: Ocala, Fla.; Bloomington, Minn.; and Sunrise, Fla. The telehealth system, which uses special equipment and software, is placed in the homes of selected AseraCare patients. The system allows patients to monitor their own key health indicators — such as blood pressure, weight, heart rate and the amount of oxygen in the blood — then securely transmit this information via telephone to the AseraCare office. The information is monitored daily by AseraCare clinicians, and also can be viewed any time by the patient's own physician.

The system provides a number of benefits, the most important of which is the ability for AseraCare to intervene early before a potential problem becomes serious. By regularly monitoring and evaluating patient condition,

AseraCare can determine if there are changes that need to be addressed between regular nurse visits. As a result, the system can help to reduce the need for unexpected doctor visits and decrease hospitalizations. In addition, the telehealth technology allows for two-way communication between AseraCare and the patient. For example, AseraCare nurses can use the system to ask patients questions to determine the reason for an unexpected weight gain.

Currently, the telehealth system is being used with patients who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart failure and uncontrolled hypertension. Additional patient diagnoses and conditions will be added as the program expands. After completion of the six-month pilot program — and based on the initial success — AseraCare anticipates that the telehealth system will be utilized in all Home Health offices.

Daily Clinical Start-Up Meetings Promote Improved Quality Outcomes

Ensuring appropriate care for all patients in a Golden LivingCenter requires a team effort. Clinical Start-Up is Golden Living's comprehensive interdisciplinary daily process with oversight of all admissions, readmissions and patient changes of condition. The Director of Nursing Services and designated department team managers engage in a comprehensive review of the care delivery in each LivingCenter and provide feedback to nurses on the quality of their interventions and assessments.

The structure and consistency of the process provide a forum for a thorough systems review of past, current and future care delivery, which promotes improved quality outcomes.

The program monitors a number of important functions at the clinical care level and allows individual patient care needs to be prioritized. The meeting and discussion also aids in ensuring timely communication to physicians, patients and families for changes in condition. The Start-Up process enables the clinical leadership team to engage the nursing staff's critical thinking skills.

Team members complete a follow-up form each day that addresses identified action items. Clinical Start-Up allows the Nursing department to effectively coordinate care and services with other disciplines — resulting in improved quality of care.



Golden University Gets New Look, Additional Education Courses

Golden University is Golden Living's online education resource for employees. Employees may access Golden University's hundreds of free courses any time to learn new skills, receive Continuing Education Units for license requirements, and renew certifications.

Golden University has received an updated look and added educational flexibility to its new platform. The new functionality also allows Golden University to track in-service training participation across the organization.

Among the many new courses that are currently available for enrollment are:

- **Diabetes Seminar**
- **Service Excellence**
- **Root Cause Analysis**

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