

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



September 11, 2006

Dear Nursing Home Administrator,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about a very exciting opportunity to become involved in a national campaign. On September 29, 2006, a coalition of nursing home stakeholders will launch an unprecedented campaign to improve the quality of care in America's nursing homes. The Advancing Excellence for America's Nursing Homes campaign pursues excellence in the quality of life and quality of care for the more than 1.5 million residents of America's nursing homes by enhancing choice, strengthening workforce, and improving clinical outcomes. Nursing homes can elect to voluntarily participate in the campaign by logging into the campaign website at www.nhqualitycampaign.org and selecting three to eight goals to work on in their own internal quality improvement efforts.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) fully supports this campaign. To this effect, CMS, together with the Campaign, will provide quality improvement materials and guidance through several mechanisms. Many quality improvement materials are available now on the internet at www.MedQIC.org, at no cost. More materials will be made available at no cost on the Campaign website (listed above). Participating providers may also access the support of the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) program. However, CMS will not have access to the campaign data or individual provider information except what is already available on Nursing Home Compare (the publicly reported quality measures) and the aggregate data results that are posted to the campaign website on a quarterly basis.

CMS encourages providers to enroll in this campaign. However, enrollment (or non-enrollment) in the campaign will have no impact on State survey and certification activities. Annual surveys of nursing home quality will continue, as will focused surveys following complaints filed against a nursing home. Enrollment in the campaign should be a decision made by the nursing home with regards to its commitment to quality improvement. CMS encourages homes to make this decision on their own and to recognize that signing onto the campaign will not affect the immediate survey and certification results, either negatively or positively. However, in the long run we expect this campaign will result in better care for our nation's nursing home residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas E. Hamilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "H".

Thomas E. Hamilton
Director, Survey & Certification Group