
Quality Close to Home: A Preliminary Design for an Integrated Quality Management System

for Home and Community-based Long-term Care Programs
for Adults with Disabilities and Frail Elders

October 2, 2006

SUMMARY

In late 2003, the Department of Health and Family Services, with the help of a grant from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), initiated a three-year project known as “Quality Close to Home,” or QCTH. This project set out to:

design a coherent and comprehensive quality management system for home and community based long-term care programs for adults in Wisconsin, working with the skills, knowledge and insights of the stakeholders in Wisconsin’s long-term care system; the CMS Quality Framework; and federal, state, and local requirements.

The attached report, *Quality Close to Home: A Preliminary Design for an Integrated Quality Management System*, is the last of the several products of this project, which was complete September 30, 2006. The attached report:

- Defines the scope of activities considered to be ‘quality management;’
- Describes the challenges facing quality management activities in the home and community-based long-term care system;
- Identifies the federal rules and regulations that must shape the quality management activities in federally-funded long-term care programs; and
- Describes a detailed vision for the activities that could comprise the core of an effective quality-management system for home and community based long-term care and how these responsibilities might be distributed in a system that efficiently integrates state and local efforts.

Of all the management functions that must operate in any organization—budgeting, procurement, human resources, the services themselves, and quality management—it is quality management that most needs to demonstrate what it means to engage in continuous improvement. Therefore, the attached report is not—cannot—be a comprehensive or final prescription for an effective long-term care quality management system. Quality management practices will always be evolving and improving.

Many observations in the attached report about the quality-management system of the expanding managed-care system are simple statements of fact: for example, that an External Quality Review Organization will be an integral part of the quality-management system. However, the attached report is not an official or final determination by the Department Health and Family Services of the requirements for either state or local quality-management activities in the expanding managed long-term care system. The details of the quality-management system will not be known until state and local policymakers have developed all the detailed specifications that will be included in waiver applications, contracts, and state and local policy documents relating to quality-management practices.

Instead, the attached report is intended to serve as a source of guidance, a basis for communication, and a reference for all the dedicated professionals, advocates, and consumers who will be involved in developing the specifications for and implementing quality-management practices for the emerging statewide system of managed long-term care.

Acknowledgements

The Department is deeply grateful to all who participated in this project, who are too numerous to acknowledge individually. Throughout the project, consumers provided their thoughtful suggestions and comments through the Stakeholder Committee of the Wisconsin Long-Term Care Council, which was formed during the course of the QCTH project and will continue beyond its close. Other consumers, knowing that it would have no immediate personal benefit for themselves, consented to give of their time and attention to help us test the Participant Experience Survey (PES).

Long-term care providers and leaders of advocacy groups provided valuable input through meetings of the Wisconsin Council on Long-term Care Reform and its Executive Committee, and through gracious participation in individual interviews. State staff assigned to different long-term care programs across administrative units within the Department provided ongoing input and collaboration.

Two firms, APS Healthcare and The Management Group (TMG), formed a partnership to staff the QCTH project; provide extensive background research and analyze data; organize and support the work of various workgroups; conduct interviews of consumers, state staff, providers, and local staff; and to write the several reports that the project produced.

Finally, staff and managers of local long-term care agencies gave generously of their time, effort, insight, and expertise to participate in many different ways, which included:

- Scheduling interviews for the test of the PES and opening their local programs to assessment with a tool that was unfamiliar to them;
- Providing thoughtful comment and suggestions on the different ways that outcomes measurement might be helpful to them in the quality-management efforts;
- Providing extensive feedback and insight in the course of workgroups that:

- Selected and defined a set of 12 personal-experience outcomes to serve as a basis for pursuing quality results for Wisconsin’s long-term care consumers;
- Established guidelines for useful measurement of personal-experience outcomes;
- Reviewed research on the calculation and use of performance indicators relating to clinical and functional outcomes;
- Reviewed research and shared experience related to assessing and reporting consumer satisfaction with services;
- Shared practices, insights, and ambitions relating to quality control of assessments, care plans, and service plans; and
- Explored requirements and practices relating to effective response to critical incidents; and
- Provided, through extensive individual interviews, information about their current quality-management practices, their experience about practices they found valuable; and their perspective on ways the State could usefully support their quality-management programs; and
- Sorted out requirements and issues relating to the optimal distribution of quality management responsibilities between the State and local agencies.

During the course of this project, a group of staff and managers who have responsibilities for quality management in their local long-term care agencies came together in a lively, productive group known as the QCTH Local Advisory Panel. In this group, they provided valuable insight to the development of the attached report, shared best practices, and formed the core of what the Department expects will be one long-lasting legacy of the QCTH project: a statewide Quality Management Council, which is expected to provide effective guidance and set the bar for effective long-term care quality management for years to come.

Background

In 2002, the Department of Health and Family Services merged the organizational units that administered several programs of community long-term care for adults with physical or developmental disabilities and frail elders. At the time of the merger, these different programs (primarily the Community Options Program, or COP; the Community Integration Program, or CIP; Family Care; and the Wisconsin Partnership Program) had different policies and practices related to the assessment of quality, the remediation of quality issues, and quality improvement.

When federal funds became available in 2003 for systems-change efforts related to quality assurance and quality improvement, the Department applied for, and received, a CMS Systems Change grant to undertake the Quality Close to Home project. At that time, a primary objective of the project was to devise quality-management strategies (that is, policies and procedures that would discover the extent to which quality objectives were being attained, remediate any identified problems, and carry out quality improvement) that could be used across all the recently-reorganized programs (COP, CIP, Family Care, and Partnership.)

However, during the course of the project, the Governor of Wisconsin announced an ambitious initiative to expand managed long-term care beyond the few counties served by the Family Care and Partnership Programs to the entire state, eventually supplanting the fee-for-service waiver programs. At that point, the QCTH project focused its efforts solely on the quality-management system that would be needed to discover, remediate, and improve the quality of care in the new system.

The earlier QCTH reports, although completed before the announcement of the managed-care expansion initiative, remain useful. These earlier efforts informed the development of the attached report, but are not repeated within it:

- the results of a trial of a participant experience survey instrument that had recently been made available to states by CMS;
- a review of other outcomes-measurement tools being used in Wisconsin's programs that serve adult long-term care consumers;
- specifications for a system of monitoring and improving the completeness and accuracy of the functional screens that determine eligibility for the adult long-term care programs; and
- a review of various practices and methods being used by local long-term care agencies (managed-care organizations and county waiver programs) to monitor and improve the quality of their services.

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Acronyms

ADL Activities of daily living

AHRQ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

BCAP Best clinical and administrative practices

BLTS Bureau of Long Term Support

CBRF Community Based Residential Facilities

CHP Community Health Partnership

CIP Community Integration Program

CMS Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

COP-W Community Options Program Waiver

DCFS Division of Children and Family Services

DDES Division of Disability and Elder Services

DHFS Department of Health and Family Services

EQRO External Quality Review Organization

HCBS Home and Community based Services

HSRS Human Services Reporting System

IADL Independent activities of daily living

IDT Interdisciplinary teams

LAP Local Advisory Panel

LTC Long-term care

MCO Managed Care Organization

MMIS Medicaid Management Information System

PIP Performance Improvement Projects

QCTH Quality Close to Home

QSR Quality Service Review

TMG The Management Group

WPP Wisconsin Partnership Program