



DQA/Provider Relationships During the Assisted Living Survey Process

Department of Health Services
Division of Quality Assurance
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Expectation

It is the shared expectation of the Bureau of Assisted Living (BAL) and the Assisted Living provider community that all parties will be treated with courtesy, respect and professionalism during the survey process. Neither party shall engage in retaliatory action of any kind. The goal is to promote quality resident care and services through unbiased, transparent and efficient surveys consistent with the [BAL Survey Guide](#).

Facility access

To maintain licensure in Wisconsin, facilities must grant the Department full access to the premises. If residents/tenants and staff are away from the facility when surveyors arrive, the licensee will ensure a representative arrives onsite within 1 hour. Unreasonable delays or other circumstances that prevent surveyors from accessing the facility will result in a deficiency.

Introduction

Upon arrival, surveyors will provide identification, introduce themselves, and request to speak to the provider representative responsible for assisting with the survey. If that person is unavailable, surveyors will proceed with survey tasks to avoid undue delays. The provider representative (if not the licensee) will follow their process to ensure the licensee is notified of the survey.

Entrance conference

Surveyors will hold an entrance conference to inform the provider representative of the type(s) of survey work to be completed, obtain staff and resident/tenant rosters and review the Survey Entrance Handout and Entrance/Exit Conference Checklist. During the entrance conference, surveyors will inquire about the provider's record keeping system. Providers will ensure surveyors have access to records within two hours of the conclusion of the entrance conference. If electronic records are used, the provider representative will ensure specific login information is provided to surveyors in read-only format. See [DQA Memo 26-001 Bureau of Assisted Living-Surveyor Access to Records](#).

During the survey

Both parties will maintain open and respectful communication to ensure a thorough and efficient survey process. The provider representative will encourage staff cooperation during interviews and observations. To avoid delays, providers will ensure surveyors receive requested records promptly, without unreasonable delay, and in their entirety. Facility staff are encouraged to ask questions and request clarification on survey tasks at any time. Surveyors will provide updates to the provider representative during the onsite visit as appropriate. Surveyors may limit sharing information about



complaint topics during the investigation and will not disclose the identity of a complainant. Surveyors will clearly communicate their needs to ensure the provider understands which records are required and any assistance they may need facilitating interviews. Both parties share the responsibility to communicate professionally and to collaboratively address any barriers to the survey process as they arise.

Exit conference

Whenever possible, surveyors will hold an exit conference with the provider representative at the end of the onsite visit to review the preliminary findings and complaint topics, if applicable. If the survey is not complete at the conclusion of the onsite visit, surveyors will provide a preliminary exit conference, develop a communication plan and provide an anticipated timeline for completion of the survey. When the survey is complete, an exit conference will be offered in a timely manner.

During the exit conference, the provider representative is encouraged to share additional information, documentation and/or context to clarify findings. As necessary and appropriate, additional information or documentation will be considered if submitted by 4:30 PM the following business day. This is not meant to circumvent the requirement during the survey to provide requested records within two hours.

The provider representative (if not the licensee) will follow their internal protocols to ensure the licensee is either included in the exit conference or promptly briefed on the findings.

Communication, conflict resolution and safety

The provider representative and surveyors are encouraged to collaborate and resolve concerns directly with each other whenever possible. If either party feels these shared expectations are not being met, or the conduct or demeanor of the other is inconsistent with these shared expectations, they should first communicate openly to address the issue. However, if the matter cannot be resolved, or if direct communication is not feasible or appropriate given the nature of the conflict, either party may bypass internal resolution and immediately contact the [BAL Regional Director/BAL Regional Supervisor](#). In response, BAL Regional Director/BAL Supervisor will intervene in an effort to resolve the concerns. The safety of all individuals is always the priority. Therefore, if the environment becomes physically or verbally unsafe, surveyors will suspend survey tasks and contact BAL Regional Director/BAL Supervisor and the provider representative will follow their internal protocols. Completion of the survey may require further communication or a follow-up onsite visit at the discretion of BAL.

Post survey questionnaire

Regardless of the survey outcomes, all providers are encouraged to complete the DQA [Post Survey Questionnaire](#). Provider feedback helps BAL evaluate the survey process, guide staff training and implement process improvements.

