



**Center for Clinical Standards and Quality/Survey & Certification Group**

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**Ref: S&C: 15-40-NH**

**DATE:** May 22, 2015

**TO:** State Survey Agency Directors

**FROM:** Director  
Survey and Certification Group

**SUBJECT:** *Information Only* - Review and Status of Nursing Home Survey: Summary of Traditional and Quality Indicator Survey (QIS) Findings and Issues

**Memorandum Summary**

- **Nursing Home Survey Evaluation:** For the past 10 years, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the States have used two standard survey processes that assess the quality of care and quality of life for nursing home residents. Enclosed is a review of both the traditional survey and QIS processes.
- **Survey Efficiency and Effectiveness:** The CMS is continuing to make improvements to QIS to address the challenges, concerns and feedback we have received to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of survey process.

**Background**

Since FY 2012 CMS has focused on making adjustments and improvements to the QIS system for States that have implemented the QIS system rather than expanding the initiative to additional States. Examples include improvements to medication pathways, addition of the desk audit report capability for supervisors, changes to user interface, adjustments to the sample sizes for small facilities, solutions to certain computer and security challenges, and additional flexibility in the system design to incorporate complaint investigations (being implemented this year).

We expect to continue to make improvements so that the States currently participating in the QIS have the support necessary to conduct surveys as effectively as possible and to realize the benefits of the QIS process. At the same time, we continue to evaluate both the traditional survey and the QIS processes to identify, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, the strengths and limitations of each system. These efforts involve considerable data analysis from survey results, user feedback from CMS Regional Offices and State Survey Agencies, technical expert panels, reviews of CMS Form 2567 statements of deficiencies, and observational reviews of the

survey processes. The purpose of this Memorandum is simply to provide an overview of the current status of our reviews.

**Assessment of the Nursing Home Survey Processes**

The attached document provides a high-level summary of the work done to examine nursing home survey methodologies for efficiency and effectiveness, as well as the actions that were taken to improve the processes, with particular emphasis on the QIS. This program brief is focused on the standard recertification survey.

The CMS will be engaging in a dialogue with all stakeholders and subject matter experts to continue to discuss and develop a path forward for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the survey process. The objective continues to be to ensure nursing homes are complying with the requirements for participation for Medicare and Medicaid, and are providing quality care that ensures the safety of residents and enables them to meet their highest practicable well-being.

**Contact:** Any questions or concerns should be directed to central mailbox for Division at [NHSurveyDevelopment@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:NHSurveyDevelopment@cms.hhs.gov).

**Effective Date:** The information provided in this memorandum should be communicated with all survey and certification staff, their managers and the State/Regional Office training coordinators within 30 days of this memorandum.

/s/

Thomas E. Hamilton

Attachment: Assessment of the Nursing Home Survey Processes

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management