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QUALITY CARE

For Immediate Release

July 28, 2015

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National Quality Organization Endorses Profession's Key Quality Indicators

*Prestigious National Quality Forum Signals Its Support for Functional Outcome Measures
Developed by AHCA*

Washington, D.C. — The American Health Care Association (AHCA) announced today that the National Quality Forum (NQF) has endorsed the only recognized standard measures in the nation to assess improvement in self-care and mobility outcomes for patients admitted from a hospital to a skilled nursing care center (SNCC) for therapy services.

“This is validation of our quality improvement efforts,” said AHCA President and CEO Mark Parkinson. “Until now, there have been no uniform tools for providers to measure their progress on quality of life improvement for individuals receiving therapy. The standards developed by both the National Association for the Support of Long Term Care (NASL) and our Association have forever changed that. More than 9,600 skilled nursing care centers across the country will now have access to these quality indicators.”

Developed by AHCA, the leading association for long term and post-acute care, and NASL, the leading association for ancillary service providers and suppliers in the long term and post-acute care community, the two measures align with what the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is requiring the profession to implement through the [IMPACT Act of 2014](#). They also support AHCA's multi-year initiative to improve quality care in SNCCs.

The risk-adjusted outcome measures are based on the CMS Continuity Assessment and Record Evaluation (CARE) Tool and information from the admission MDS 3.0 assessment. Both measures are calculated on a rolling 12-month average and updated quarterly.

The CARE Improvement in Mobility and CARE Improvement in Self Care measures calculate the average change in mobility and self-care scores between admission and discharge for all residents admitted to a skilled nursing care center from a hospital or another post-acute care setting for therapy regardless of payor status.

“Validated, standardized assessments are needed to evaluate the quality of services provided and identify areas for improvement,” said David Gifford, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President of Quality and Regulatory Affairs. “This is now a reality. Patients and loved ones can make informed decisions when selecting providers. And policymakers and payors can now use these measures to determine success in payment for post-acute rehab.”

NQF endorsement is secured through extensive testing and evaluation of a measure's reliability and validity. Sponsors are asked to provide detailed descriptions of how the measure is calculated and risk adjusted as part of the process.

Nearly 2.5 million Medicare beneficiaries receive physical and/or occupational therapy each year in SNCCs. Until now, no consistent measurements existed that showed whether or not patients discharged from a care center for rehabilitation have improved in functionality. Together with NASL, AHCA worked to develop the self-care and mobility measures.

In May 2015, AHCA rolled out its expanded, national [Quality Initiative](#) to continue to improve quality care in SNCCs. The Initiative challenges AHCA members to meet measurable outcomes in eight key areas by 2018, which include adopting the use of the mobility and self-care sections of CMS' CARE tool and report functional outcome measures using AHCA's LTC Trend TrackerSM.

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ABOUT AHCA/NCAL

The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) represents more than 12,500 non-profit and proprietary skilled nursing centers, assisted living communities, sub-acute centers and homes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. By delivering solutions for quality care, AHCA/NCAL aims to improve the lives of the millions of frail, elderly and individuals with disabilities who receive long term or post-acute care in our member facilities each day. For more information, please visit www.ahca.org or www.ncal.org.