



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

161 Delaware Avenue Delmar, NY 12054-1393

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H.
Commissioner

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 7, 2005

DAL/DQS #05-12
Subject: Quality Improvement Practices and
Initiatives in Nursing Homes

Dear Administrator:

For over two years, the New York State Department of Health (DOH) has been emphasizing the importance of nursing home participation in quality improvement practices and initiatives. These activities strengthen nursing home processes to enhance the quality of life and care for individuals residing in nursing homes. An important QI initiative is about to begin, in which we strongly encourage your active participation.

The Island Peer Review Organization (IPRO), the Healthcare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) of New York, is offering a valuable opportunity to all facilities in New York State. The Setting Targets - Achieving Results (STAR) Program has been developed with funding from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and is being launched shortly as part of the next phase of the Nursing Home Quality Initiative. STAR is a web-based program designed to assist nursing homes use facility-specific quality measure data to set target improvement goals to improve resident outcomes.

As you know, the DOH and the QIO have developed a strong partnership to further integrate quality improvement practices in New York. IPRO's technical and clinical expertise has benefited hundreds of nursing facilities in New York over the past three years. IPRO's quality improvement staff have already contacted your facility to participate in the STAR program. We encourage nursing homes in New York State to participate with IPRO in this innovative program.

As with all such QIO programs, there is no cost to participate. Your participation is confidential. The targets you establish and your performance data throughout the project are not reported to the Department or used as part of the survey program. However, the STAR initiative has significant value to your facility and the experience of participation in the program may enhance your facility's performance in many dimensions in the future.

We strongly encourage nursing home participation in this innovative and valuable project. CMS expects 65% of nursing homes nationally to set targets by December 1, 2005. We hope that New York's nursing home community will demonstrate its commitment to continuous quality improvement by significantly exceeding the CMS participation target. Your participation is critical in achieving that goal.

Please respond to IPRO with your commitment to participate as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Pauline Kinney, Director of NHQI, IPRO, via e-mail at PKinney@nyqio.sdps.org. Thank you in advance for your commitment to this project and ensuring high-quality care and dignified quality of life to our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith W. Servis".

Keith W. Servis, Director
Division of Quality & Surveillance
for Nursing Homes & ICFs/MR