

## First Stop on the *Road to Excellence*: Signing Up with STAR

Hundreds of Illinois' nursing homes are joining the ***Road to Excellence*** quality improvement campaign, sponsored by the Health Care Council of Illinois, Life Services Network of Illinois, Illinois Health Care Association and Illinois Council on Long Term Care. This groundbreaking campaign centers on making substantive care improvements in three important areas: ***reducing pressure ulcers, improving pain management, and assessing and improving customer satisfaction.***

The first step on this ***Road to Excellence*** is a very easy one: sign up with the STAR (Setting Targets – Achieving Results) Web site at [www.nhqi-star.org](http://www.nhqi-star.org).

**The associations ask that each facility sign up at this Web site by March 15. This step is a required component of the Road to Excellence quality initiative. All facilities will need to sign up at the STAR Web site.**

More than 9,600 nursing homes across the country use the STAR program to continually improve the quality of care they provide to their residents. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created this helpful Web site to allow facilities to individually and confidentially set Quality Improvement targets in six care areas. Two of these quality improvement measures apply directly to the *Road to Excellence* campaign:

- High-risk pressure ulcers
- Chronic care pain

Facilities have the option of also using other STAR target care areas if they so desire. For example, facilities serving short-stay residents have the alternative option of setting equivalent STAR targets for post-acute care pressure ulcers and post-acute care pain.

Research has demonstrated that the surest way of making real improvements in a facility's quality of care is by first setting a goal. This simple Web site allows the facility to set quarterly or annual targets and provides charts and graphs on how well the facility is performing in each of the quality improvement measures.

STAR registration is FREE and available to all Medicare- and/or Medicaid-certified nursing homes. Once a facility is registered and sets its targets, the Web site is only used by the facility as part of its internal Quality Assurance program. The information on the Web site is not public or accessible to CMS, IDPH, the ombudsmen, the media or others. **The targets are for internal usage only, and there are no negative consequences for not achieving target goals.**

You can access your facility's most recent Quality Measure scores by visiting [www.nhqi-star.org](http://www.nhqi-star.org) and clicking on "Public QM Data" at the top left of the home page.

Charts and graphs show you how your facility has scored for each Quality Measure, and how your QM scores compare to state and national averages. Note that there is a lag time of approximately five months between the end of a quarter and the public release of that quarter's QM scores.

Again, your facility's Quality Measure is available to the public, as it has always been. **However, your target setting through the STAR Web site is private and confidential, for your internal use only, and is not available to the public.**

Facilities can set their QM targets through a variety of methods. One facility may want to use the state or national QM average as its target. For instance, a facility that has a QM score for "Percent of High-Risk Residents Who have Pressure Ulcers" of 20 % may want to set its target for the current state average of 15 % or national average of 12 %. Or, the facility might choose a nationwide percentile ranking, such as the QM average for the 10<sup>th</sup> top percentile of nursing homes across the country, as its target. Another option is "Percent Improvement." For example, if your facility set a 20% improvement goal to a Chronic Care Pain QM score of 10%, the facility's target would be 8%. Many other target-setting options exist as well to meet the needs of each facility.

Here are the steps for creating a STAR account:

1. Log on to [www.nhqi-star.org](http://www.nhqi-star.org)
2. Click on "Create an Account."
3. Enter your Medicare/Medicaid provider number. This is **not** your facility ID. It is a 6 digit alphanumeric number.
4. The "My Profile" page will be displayed.
5. Your facility demographics will be prepopulated in the form on the My Profile page. If any of the demographics are incorrect, you can correct them.
6. Enter your contact information, a username and password. Your contact information will be used to send periodic e-mail reminders about target setting.
7. Write down your username and password
8. Click submit

Any Internet connection and a Web browser will work when accessing the STAR site. No specific hardware or software is required.

Again, signing up at the STAR Web site is quick, easy and safe, and provides a useful compass for making real improvements in the quality of care provided to the residents.

It is the crucial first step that hundreds of Illinois nursing facilities are taking on their **Road to Excellence** in optimizing the quality of Illinois' nursing home care.

**[The associations ask that facilities sign up at the STAR Web site by March 15. Road to Excellence does require facilities to submit STAR quarterly trend reports to their respective associations.](#)**

For more information or assistance on the STAR target-setting program, contact Illinois Foundation for Quality Health Care (IFQHC) at 800-386-6431. Ask to speak to a Nursing Home Quality Improvement Advisor.