

Quality in Long-Term Care: The Not-for-profit Difference

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America's future is filled with older faces. AAHSA and its members are working today to ensure that long-term care not only meets the needs of tomorrow's older Americans, but exceeds their expectations. AAHSA is joining providers, policymakers, researchers, advocates, regulators, and others to develop policies and practices that will make long-term care the center of innovative, quality care for our older citizens.

Quality Innovation Caring

That's the not-for-profit difference.

Not-for-profits: More Resources Invested In Resident Care

Not-for-profit nursing homes also invest more resources in direct and indirect resident care than for-profit homes. According to HCIA, Inc., and Arthur Andersen LLP in *The Guide to the Nursing Home Industry, 2000*, an analysis relying heavily in HCFA's data:

- Not-for-profit providers spent 11 percent more than their for-profit counterparts on direct daily care per resident. Direct care expenditures are those "directly associated with patient care, such as nursing costs."
- Not-for-profits spent 18 percent more than for-profits on indirect daily care per resident. Indirect care expenditures include "laundry and linen service, housekeeping, dietary, cafeteria, central services and supply, pharmacy, and social services."
- Not-for-profit nursing homes have no shareholders to pay. Instead, they reinvest in the most important people within the organization... the residents. They use their funds to better the facility, the staff, and the quality of care and services for the people they serve.

Not-for-profits: Significantly Fewer Deficiencies

Not-for-profit nursing homes consistently show significantly fewer deficiencies than for-profit providers when inspected for compliance with the government's survey and certification standards. According to HCFA's 1999 statistics, reported in the Cowles Research Group's *Nursing Home Statistical Yearbook, 1999*:

- Not-for-profit providers had 34 percent fewer deficiencies than for-profit nursing homes.

This demonstrates that not-for-profits are more successful at meeting the government's standards for nursing home care. But most mission-driven not-for-profit homes are not content to stop at that measure. They believe the bar should be raised to a higher standard.

Not-for-profits: Setting the Standard Across the Continuum

The nation's not-for-profit long-term care providers are on a mission. Their objective: to provide the highest quality and most compassionate care to the residents they serve. The good news for the elderly, their families, and the entire long-term care field is that they are succeeding.

At a time when long-term care is under intense scrutiny, not-for-profit providers are showing that there is a difference when it comes to quality. By consistently providing more hands-on care and developing new, more creative ways to meet the needs of their residents, not-for-profits are setting the standard for quality in the field.

The latest government statistics reaffirm the not-for-profit difference. According to the most recent figures based on Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) data, not-for-profit nursing homes:

- **Provide more hours of care per patient day.**
- **Invest more resources in resident care.**
- **Average significantly fewer deficiencies than for-profit homes.**

Not-for-profits: More Hours of Care for Residents

Not-for-profit nursing homes significantly exceed for-profit homes in the number of hours staff spend caring for residents. According to 1999 HCFA statistics:

- Average registered nurse (RN) hours per resident day were more than twice as high at not-for-profit nursing homes than at for-profits.
- Licensed practical nurse (LPN) hours were 21 percent higher among not-for-profit nursing homes on average.
- Certified nurse aide (CNA) hours averaged about 18 percent higher at not-for-profit than for-profit homes.

These nursing professionals are the frontline caregivers in long-term care. They help elderly residents with the most intimate and basic aspects of living—eating, bathing, taking needed medications, and participating in enriching activities. Their job is to care for and comfort residents, treating them with the dignity and respect they deserve. Perhaps more than any other measure, the time nursing home staff spend with residents directly translates into higher quality care.

Not-for-profits: The Place for Innovation

Not-for-profits are where innovation happens. Around the country, not-for-profit nursing

homes are changing the face of long-term care. Based on extensive research and a desire to provide a more dignified and homelike setting for residents, providers are completely redesigning their approach to care. The hospital-style facility of old, with its institutional environment and rigid procedures, is being replaced with an approach to care in which residents and staff strive for a home-like, family atmosphere, and residents are free to make their own choices about their day.

AAHSA members are at the forefront of this quality revolution. Many have embraced the Eden Alternative, a care approach that responds to residents' feelings and chases away loneliness, helplessness, and boredom by bringing children, animals, and plants into the environment to create a "human habitat." Other nursing homes have adopted a quality assurance program they call "Wellspring." These homes are living laboratories where researchers are studying their efforts to train and empower staff and make systemic changes to make a real difference in the lives of residents.

Studying this kind of innovation is the Institute for the Future of Aging Services, an AAHSA-sponsored organization whose mission is to conduct rigorous, objective research of long-term care providers' efforts to improve quality. In addition to gathering concrete data on the effectiveness of these and other efforts, the Institute will help develop models of quality care that can be replicated nationally.

Not-for-profit innovations already are gaining attention. The *New York Times* recently praised AAHSA members in an editorial that stated not-for-profit providers are shaping daily life "around the needs and preferences of the residents, rather than the institutions." It's not surprising, the *Times* continued, "in an industry increasingly dominated by corporate chain ownership, that the changes are occurring in nonprofit, church-sponsored homes."

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