



Health Quality Ontario Long-Term Care Consistency of Assignment

Best Practices

Updated on September 23, 2014

“Insanity is doing things the way we’ve always done them and expecting different results”

Albert Einstein

Evidence-informed best practices are based on quality evidence and should be implemented into practice to optimize outcomes.⁶ Listed below you will find best practices graded according to the level of evidence. To view a description of the levels of evidence, [click here](#).

To help you move from best evidence to best practice, **click on the + button next to each best practice** to find details on how to implement, as well as change ideas to test using a PDSA approach.

Change ideas are specific and practical changes informed by experience and research that focus on improving specific aspects of a system, process or behaviour. To learn more about change ideas see the [QI: Getting Started tab](#).

Evidence-Informed Best Practices

Communicate action plan to residents, families and staff for feedback

Make Change

Evidence-Informed Best Practice	How To Implement	Toolbox
<p>Communicate action plan to residents, families and staff for feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate action plan to residents, families and staff (action plan goals, timeframes) for feedback • Communicate staffing requirements/adjustments at change of shift • Support the development and integration of communication tools (e.g. 24 hour report) • Include staff consistent assignment into discussions at all admission care conferences and annual care conferences • Educate residents and families about consistent assignment • Provide staff training and education to support required changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Practice Guideline Toolkit: Client Centred Care [http://tctoolkit.mao.ca/resources/client-centred-care], Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) • Improving the Consistency of PSW Assignment Change Package [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/documents/qi/rf-change-package-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Poster [http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-poster-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], and Change Table [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-change-table-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Residents First, Health Quality Ontario

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Communicate Action Plan to Residents, Families, and Staff for Feedback

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Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes, Quality Partner. Implementation Guide: Improving Consistent Assignment of Nursing Home Staff. Available from: http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/files/impguides/2_ConsistentAssignment_TAW_Guide.pdf

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Engage collective bargaining units

Make Change

Evidence-Informed Best Practice	How To Implement	Toolbox
<p>Engage collective bargaining units</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish roles and responsibilities for nurse leaders that enable effective leadership practices for assigning and replacing staff that is in alignment with a consistent assignment approach Review roles and responsibilities of each health care provider Consider a mutual commitment to consistent assignment with collective bargaining units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the Consistency of PSW Assignment Change Package [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/documents/qi/rf-change-package-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Poster [http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-poster-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], and Change Table [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-change-table-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Residents First, Health Quality Ontario

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Develop review policy in your long-term care home

Make Change

Evidence-Informed Best Practice	How To Implement	Toolbox
<p>Develop review policy in your long-term care home</p>	<p>Develop systems to avoid mistakes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a review policy in your long-term care home to ensure it reflects changes related to consistent assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the Consistency of PSW Assignment Change Package [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/documents/qi/rf-change-package-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Poster [http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-poster-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], and Change Table [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-change-table-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Residents First, Health Quality Ontario

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Ensure nurse leaders are fair and equitable in planning consistency of assignment

Make Change

Evidence-Informed Best Practice	How To Implement	Toolbox
<p>Ensure nurse leaders are fair and equitable in planning consistency of assignment</p> <p><i>See Toolbox: RNAO's Developing and Sustaining Effective Staffing and Workload Practices</i></p>	<p>Support nurse leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure nurse leaders are fair and equitable in the planning of consistent assignment of PSWs for resident care based on relative needs to care for each resident • Ensure nurse leaders create a balance between resident care needs and consistent assignment decisions, considering PSW preferences and recognizing contractual obligations and human resource policies • Ensure nurse leaders balance competing values and priorities for consistent assignment in changing situations (e.g., outbreak, acute change in condition) • Support a culture of empowerment to enable nurses to have responsibility and demonstrate accountability in creating consistent assignments <p>Define roles and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish roles and responsibilities for nurse leaders that enable effective leadership practices for assigning and replacing staff that is in alignment with a consistent assignment approach • Review roles and responsibilities of each health care provider • Consider a mutual commitment to consistent assignment with collective bargaining units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and Sustaining Effective Staffing and Workload Practices [http://mao.ca/bpg/guidelines/developing-and-sustaining-effective-staffing-and-workload-practices], Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) • Improving the Consistency of PSW Assignment Change Package [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/documents/qi/rf-change-package-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Poster [http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-poster-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], and Change Table [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-change-table-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Residents First, Health Quality Ontario

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Ensure Nurse Leaders are Fair and Equitable in Planning Consistency of Assignment

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Identify trends and patterns that influence staffing

Make Change

Evidence-Informed Best Practice	How To Implement	Toolbox
<p>Identify trends and patterns that influence staffing</p> <p><i>See Toolbox: RNAO's Developing and Sustaining Effective Staffing and Workload Practices</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify factors that influence staffing (e.g., resident population, resident home areas, shifts, holidays etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and Sustaining Effective Staffing and Workload Practices [http://mao.ca/bpg/guidelines/developing-and-sustaining-effective-staffing-and-workload-practices], Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) Improving the Consistency of PSW Assignment Change Package [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/documents/qi/rf-change-package-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Poster [http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-poster-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], and Change Table [http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/Documents/qi/rf-change-table-consistent-assignment-en.pdf], Residents First, Health Quality Ontario

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Measurement

Updated on September 23, 2014

“Some is not a number, soon is not a time.”

Don Berwick, former President and CEO of IHI, December 2004, at launch of the 100,000 Lives Campaign

How will we know if a change is an improvement? Measurement is one of the critical steps in a quality improvement (QI) initiative that assesses the impact of your tests of change. **Quality indicators** are used to measure how well something is performing. There are three types of quality indicators used to measure your QI efforts: **outcome** (indicators that capture clinical outcomes and or system performance), **process** (indicators that track the processes that measure whether the system is working as planned), and **balancing** indicators (indicators that ensure that changing one part of the system does not cause new problems in other parts of the system).

Key Measurement Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose measures that support the team’s aim statement Consider qualitative and quantitative measures Use existing data collection systems, whenever possible Integrate measurement into the daily routine Use a set of five to seven measures to track progress throughout your QI project

Suggested measures for QI initiatives are listed in the table below.

Type of Measure	Indicator	Numerator	Denominator
Outcome	1. <u>Average</u> number of primary PSWs* per resident who provide care over a one month period	Total number of PSWs who were the primary PSWs per resident in the previous month (average number of PSWs per resident)	Total number of residents in the LTC home on the last day of the month
Process	2. <u>Percentage</u> of staff turnover each month	Number of voluntary FT and PT PSW resignations** for the entire LTC home over previous month	Total number of active FT and PT PSW’s for the entire LTC home on the last day of the month
	3. <u>Percentage</u> of agency PSW hours each month	Number of paid PSW agency hours in the previous month	Total number paid PSW hours in LTC home in previous month
Balancing	4. <u>Percentage</u> of total PSW paid hours that are paid sick hours each month	Number of PSW hours that were paid as PSW sick hours in previous month	Total number of PSW paid hours in the previous month

* Definition of primary PSW: The PSW who is primarily responsible for the activities of daily living, including dressing, eating, toilet use, and personal hygiene

** Guidelines for exclusion: Death, Retirement, Long Term Disability, Compassionate Care leave, Maternity/Parental

Run Charts

Collected measures can be presented graphically by plugging the monthly results into a [run chart](#).

Tools & Resources

Updated on September 23, 2014

Tools

QI Tools

- Communications Plan: [Instructions](#), [Tool](#)
- Fishbone Template: [Instructions](#), [Tool](#)
- Five Whys: [Instructions](#), [Tool](#)
- Measurement Plan Template: [Instructions](#), [Tool](#)
- Pareto Chart: [Instructions](#), [Tool](#)
- [PDSA Template](#)
- [Project Charter](#)
- [Tree Diagram Worksheet](#)

For a more comprehensive list of tools and resources, visit the following links on our HQO website:

- [HQO Tools and Resources](http://www.hqontario.ca/quality-improvement/tools-and-resources/) [http://www.hqontario.ca/quality-improvement/tools-and-resources/]

Resources

Consistent PSW Assignment

- [Best Practice Guideline Toolkit: Client Centred Care](http://tctoolkit.mao.ca/resources/client-centred-care) [http://tctoolkit.mao.ca/resources/client-centred-care]
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO)
- [Client Centred Care E-Learning Program](http://clientcentredcare.mao.ca/login.php) [http://clientcentredcare.mao.ca/login.php]
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO)
- [Developing and Sustaining Effective Staffing and Workload Practices](http://mao.ca/bpg/guidelines/developing-and-sustaining-effective-staffing-and-workload-practices) [http://mao.ca/bpg/guidelines/developing-and-sustaining-effective-staffing-and-workload-practices]
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Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO)
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Residents First, Health Quality Ontario
- [Improving the Consistency of PSW Assignment Measurement Worksheets](http://www.hqontario.ca/quality-improvement/long-term-care/tools-and-resources) [http://www.hqontario.ca/quality-improvement/long-term-care/tools-and-resources]
Residents First, Health Quality Ontario

QI Resources

- [Interpreting Run Charts](#)

Health Quality Ontario

- [Model for Improvement \(Clip 1\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCYghxtioLY) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCYghxtioLY]
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
- [Model for Improvement \(Clip 2\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MlUqdulNwQ&feature=relmfu) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MlUqdulNwQ&feature=relmfu]
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
- [PDSA Cycle Video \(Part 1\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ceS9Ta820&feature=youtu.be) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ceS9Ta820&feature=youtu.be]
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
- [PDSA Cycle Video \(Part 2\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYoJxjmv_QI&feature=relmfu) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYoJxjmv_QI&feature=relmfu]
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
- [The run chart: a simple analytical tool for learning from variation in healthcare processes](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%E2%80%A2%09The+run+chart%3A+a+simple+analytical+tool+for+learning+from+variation+in+healthcare+processes)
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%E2%80%A2%09The run chart%3A a simple analytical tool for learning from variation in healthcare processes]
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Background

Updated on September 23, 2014

Issue

Consistent assignment (also known as *permanent assignment*) refers to having the same Personal Support Workers (PSWs) consistently caring for the same residents when they are on duty. When PSWs are consistently assigned they have the opportunity to provide resident-centred care focused on understanding of preferences and routines, creating comfort and security and supporting early detection of emerging health problems. Some homes use rotating assignments with the belief that it offers advantages, however research has shown staff morale and burnout is exacerbated by rotating staff.¹

The good news is that residents' quality of life and staff satisfaction can be improved through consistent assignment. There are many advantages to consistent assignment, for both residents and staff, including:²

1. Better care for residents
2. Improved job satisfaction
3. Staff feeling valued
4. Staff feeling empowered
5. Strong foundation for resident-centred care
6. More familiarity with residents' needs and desires
7. Fewer "call-outs" (missed shifts)



75%

Reduction in pressure ulcer incidences after introducing consistent assignment.

Call to Action

Consistent assignment is a suggested practice for long-term care homes to provide resident-centred care. Improvements in consistent assignment of PSWs have been shown to positively impact outcomes for staff and residents. For example, one facility in the U.S. saw a 75% reduction in the incidence of pressure ulcers after implementing consistent assignment, and after a year of implementing consistent assignment, facilities in California found that staff turnover rates fell by 29%.² Quality improvement consistency of assignment [change ideas](#) in long-term care homes aim to promote consistent PSW assignment by tailoring solutions to each individual home.

While the tools and information provided in this quality improvement resource focus on the process of quality improvement for the home, the ultimate goal is to provide residents with the best possible care.



29%

Reduction in staff turnover rates after introducing consistent assignment.

References

1. **Residents First Change Package: Roadmap to Consistency of PSW Assignment.**

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2. **Farrell D. Consistent Assignment: A Key Step to Individualized Care.**

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