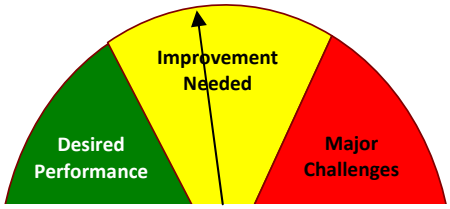
Colorado Health and Health Care Profile: Nursing Home Clients

Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing October 2009

Colorado Medicaid is a public health insurance program for low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities administered by the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. It is the goal of Colorado Medicaid to improve the health and functioning of Medicaid clients by improving their access to quality, cost-effective health care services. *Colorado Health and Health Care* profile reports examine the Department's progress in achieving that goal.

Medicaid Nursing Home Gauge

This issue of *Colorado Health and Health Care* looks at Colorado's successes and challenges regarding nursing home residents. In 2008, 9,192 Coloradans were residing in a nursing home facility, representing 2% of 391,962 Medicaid clients. Nursing home care represents $505,162,843 or 23 % of the $2.2 billion total Medicaid budget. With the goal of improving the health and quality of care provided to nursing home clients, this issue of Colorado Health and Health Care looks at the progress in achieving this goal. To this end, we compare between 2008 Colorado to U.S. nursing home performance average.



On the Right Track	Improvement Needed	Major Challenges
• Fewer short- term, high-risk and low-risk residents with pressure ulcers • Prevalence of urinary tract infections	• Prevalence of behavioral symptoms affecting others • Residents who were physically restrained • Residents who have moderate to severe pain	• Prevalence of falls • Prevalence of occasional or frequent bladder or bowel incontinence without a toileting plan

On the Right Track

Fewer pressure ulcers

- **Short-term residents with Pressure Ulcers -** The percent of post-acute care hospital residents in a nursing home who have developed pressure sores during their short nursing home stay (less than 90 days). Pressure ulcers are also called bedsores and range in severity from mild to severe. **Colorado nursing homes average 5% better than the national nursing home average.** The national average was 18% while the Colorado average was 13**%.**
- **High Risk Residents With Pressure Ulcers -** The percent of residents in a nursing home who have developed pressure sores. Residents who are considered to be at high risk are either 1) impaired in their ability to adjust their position in bed or transfer from/to bed, 2) comatose, or 3) suffer from malnutrition. **Colorado nursing homes average 2% better than the national nursing home average.** The national average was 13% while the Colorado average was 11%.
- **Low Risk Residents With Pressure Ulcers –** The percent of low risk residents in a nursing home with Pressure Ulcers are those who do not meet one of the high-risk criteria. **Colorado nursing homes average 1% better than the national nursing home average.** The national average was 3% while the Colorado average was 2%.
- Pressure Ulcer reduction is also a Healthy People 2010 Objective**,** which is "Reduce the proportion of nursing home residents with a current diagnosis of pressure ulcers." The target for Healthy People is to reduce pressure ulcers to 8 per 1000 residents.

Prevalence of urinary tract infections

Urinary tract infection (UTI) is a common infection in long term care facilities. Despite good care, some residents in a long term care facility may develop urinary tract infections. The prevalence of urinary tract infections in Colorado nursing homes has remained relatively constant between 9-10% over the past several years. **Colorado is currently performing at the national average of 10% for urinary tract infections.**

The data presented in this health profile has been compiled from the MDS via the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and compares all nursing home residents in Colorado to the national averages for the first quarter of 2009. The items reported represent a portion of the quality measures implemented by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as part of their Nursing Home Quality Initiatives (NHQI). The Minimum Data Set (MDS) is part of the U.S. federally mandated process for clinical assessment of all residents in Medicare or Medicaid certified nursing homes. This process provides a comprehensive assessment of each resident's functional capabilities and helps nursing home staff identify health problems and plan for resident care needs.

Needing Improvement

- **Prevalence of behavioral symptoms affecting others**

  The percentage of Colorado nursing home residents who exhibit verbal abuse, physical abuse, or socially inappropriate or disruptive behavior which affects other residents. **Colorado nursing homes average 3% worse than the national nursing home average.** The national average was 17% while the Colorado average was 20%. Low performance on this measure may reflect the absence of an effective behavior management program or the high number of nursing home residents with major mental illness diagnoses, which represent approximately 20% of the total nursing home resident population.

- **Residents who were physically restrained**

  Colorado nursing homes continue to make progress decreasing the percentage of residents who are physically restrained. Over the past four years, **Colorado nursing homes have decreased the percentage of residents restrained from 6% in 2005 to 5% in 2008, an almost 1% improvement over this four year period.**

- **Residents who have moderate to severe pain**

  Colorado nursing homes are making steady progress decreasing the percentage of residents who have moderate to severe pain. Over the past four years, **Colorado nursing homes have made a 3% decrease in the percentage of residents with moderate to severe pain from 12% in 2005 to 9% in 2008. The current national average is 8% while the Colorado average was 9%, making Colorado nursing homes 1% worse than the national average.**

Major Challenges

- **Prevalence of resident falls**

  Residents who have fallen within the past 30 days. Falls result in disability, functional decline and reduced quality of life. About 1,800 older adults living in nursing homes die each year from fall-related injuries. **Colorado nursing homes average 4% worse than the national nursing home average.** The national average was 13% while the Colorado average was 17%. Fall-related injuries are among the most common, disabling and expensive health conditions experienced by older adults. Falls account for 10 percent of emergency department visits and 6 percent of hospitalizations among those over age 65.

- **Prevalence of occasional or frequent bladder or bowel incontinence without a toileting plan**

  Residents with occasional or frequent bladder incontinence ***or*** bowel incontinence on the target assessment ***and*** who have no scheduled toileting plan ***or*** no bladder-retraining program. **Colorado nursing homes average 13% worse than the national average for residents with a prevalence of occasional or frequent bladder/bowel incontinence without a toileting plan.** The national average was 71% while the Colorado average was 84%. Additionally, occasional or frequent bladder/bowel incontinence is 3% more prevalent in Colorado than on a national average. The combined average for occasional/frequent bladder and bowel incontinence is 24% while the national average is 21%. Interestingly, the combined average for residents rated as "Incontinent" in Colorado is significantly lower than the national average. Only 25% of Colorado nursing home residents were rated as bladder/bowel incontinent while the national average was 34%, almost a 10% difference.

How We Are Addressing the Challenges

Improving Care of Pressure Ulcers, Pain Management and Reducing Physical Restraints:

- The Department has worked with stakeholders to design and implement a Nursing Home Pay-for-Performance program as part of **House Bill 08-1114** (White, Isgar), which focuses on nursing home quality of care and facility management as well as residents' quality of life. Those nursing facilities that provide services resulting in better care and a higher quality of life for residents will receive additional reimbursement. The current pay-for-performance program includes measurements for pressure ulcers, pain management and physical restraints. Annually, the pay-for-performance measures are reviewed and revised by the Department and nursing home stakeholders to focus attention on improving the overall care, well-being and health outcomes of nursing home residents.

Improving Behavioral Health Services for Nursing Home Residents:

- The Department has worked with stakeholders to design and implement a Nursing Home Specialized Behavioral Program, another element of House Bill 08-1114, which focuses on getting specialized services to residents needing psychosocial services. Those nursing facilities that provide specialized behavioral health services that result in effective behavior management and functional improvement for their residents will receive additional reimbursement.

Collaborating for the Good of Nursing Home Residents:

- The Department has established a **Nursing Facility Advisory Council** whose mission is to "Facilitate communication and an exchange of ideas between providers, stakeholders, and the Department regarding funding, policy, service provision and reform, which lead to accessible, cost-effective, quality care that benefit nursing facility residents."

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