



**PA NURSING CARE**  
FACILITIES BEST PRACTICES

DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Department of Health Best Practices Protocols Improve  
Nursing Care Facilities**

**HARRISBURG** – Results from the state Department of Health’s Pennsylvania Nursing Care Facilities Best Practices Project revealed that best practices protocols have had a positive impact on the quality of care at nursing care facilities across the state.

The Department initiated the project, which is in its final phase of study this month, to create measure and provide best practices protocols for Pennsylvania nursing homes.

“The Department of Health’s overall goal for the project is to provide Pennsylvania nursing homes with proven best practices to improve the quality of care for their residents,” state Health Secretary Dr. Calvin B. Johnson said. “The Department is committed to moving beyond our traditional regulatory role and finding ways to improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians.”

In celebration of Public Health Week, April 3 -9, Deputy Secretary for Quality Assurance Richard H. Lee, who spearheaded the project, welcomed nursing home staff and distinguished guests from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Hospital and HealthSystems Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Health Law Project, Quality Insights of Pennsylvania, Morrison Informatics, Inc., and Kendal Outreach, LLC, to participate in a nursing home workshop to exchange ideas for improving quality of care for residents.

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Lee presented awards to participating facilities for their outstanding performance during the Best Practices Project.

“The positive results from this project demonstrate that through systematic and consistent implementation of best practices, quality of care can be improved for nursing home residents,” Lee said.

Introduced in April 2001, the project was designed to evaluate the quality of care within the Commonwealth’s nursing homes and implement standardized best practices procedures designed to improve the quality of care for nursing home residents. The project, the first-of-its-kind in the nation, uses scientific research methods based on industry-standard quality indicators to benchmark and measure the success of best practice protocols in nursing facilities’ treatment plans.

Over 60 test facilities implemented at least one of five best practices protocols between March 2002 and March 2006. The research indicated significant increases in the test facilities’ quality indicators in each of the five areas studied: Activities of Daily Living (eating and dressing), Pain Management, Depression Management, Pressure Ulcer Prevention and Urinary Incontinence Management.

Overall, test facilities improved residents’ functionality in activities of daily living by 26 percent. Test facilities also experienced a significant improvement in pain management, including a 15 percent improvement in the behavior indicator of pain management. In depression management, test facilities showed a 15 percent improvement in combined quality indicator rates. Test facilities for prevention of pressure ulcers improved by 16 percent, and urinary incontinence management improved 2 percent. In addition, results from the project showed that best practices can be interrelated and lead to quality improvement in multiple areas.

Led by Morrison Informatics, Inc., a Mechanicsburg, Pa. based healthcare consulting company, the project team includes nationally known, qualified and experienced professionals who tested effective best practices quality improvement models in facilities, monitored implementation and evaluated results. The team includes Malcolm Morrison, Ph.D. of Morrison Informatics, Inc.; Sue Nonemaker, RN, MS, and John Morris, Ph.D. from the Hebrew SeniorLife Institute for Aging Research, Roslindale, Mass.; Brant Fries, Ph.D. of the University of Michigan; Beryl Goldman, Ph.D., RN, NHA of Kendal Outreach, LLC, Kennett Square, Pa.; Sally McCue, MBA of Clifton Gunderson LLP, Calverton, Md.; and Nancy Sacunas of Sacunas Stoessel, Harrisburg, Pa.

To learn more about results from the *Pennsylvania Nursing Care Facilities Best Practices Project*, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH or visit the Web site: [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us).

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**About the Pennsylvania Department of Health**

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is responsible for planning and coordinating health resources throughout the commonwealth. It licenses and regulates a variety of health facilities, such as hospitals, nursing homes, ambulatory surgical facilities and other in-patient and out-patient facilities. In addition, the Department supports outreach, education, prevention and treatment services across a variety of program areas. Grants and subsidies to community-based groups are used to provide essential services to the commonwealth's citizens including programs for women and children, nutrition, immunization, diagnosis and treatment of certain blood and communicable diseases, cancer control and prevention, and the prevention and treatment of substance abuse.