

Quality Improvement Road Map to
**IMPROVING THE CONSISTENCY
OF PSW ASSIGNMENT**

Residents First: On the Road to Quality Improvement

Residents First is a provincial initiative that promotes quality improvement for and by the longterm care (LTC) sector. The initiative is supported by the Government of Ontario and is being implemented in partnership with Ontario's Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) over a period of five years.

Residents First begins and ends with residents. The vision for this initiative is that each resident enjoy safe, effective and responsive care that helps them achieve the highest potential of quality of life. Residents First supports enhancing a workplace culture where staff – from leadership to the front lines – are jointly engaged in a continuous journey toward quality improvement. The initiative is focused on achieving tangible and measurable improvements in LTC homes, based on internationally recognized indicators of quality. Residents First will provide people working in long-term care with knowledge, training and tools to support them in making quality improvements aimed at enhancing safety and promoting changes that make a positive difference in the well being of residents.

Residents First is being launched in 2010. The goal is to reach all homes within five years.

Residents First partners include:

- Concerned Friends of Ontario Citizens in Care Facilities
- Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada
- Local Health Integration Networks
- Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors
- Ontario Association of Residents' Councils
- Ontario Family Councils' Program
- Ontario Health Quality Council
- Ontario Long-Term Care Association
- Ontario Long-Term Care Physicians
- Quality Healthcare Network
- Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
- Seniors Health Research Transfer Network

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1. The Starting Point – Facing the Challenge of Consistent Assignment

Welcome and congratulations! By picking up this road map to providing Consistency of Personal Support Worker (PSW) Assignment to residents, you are taking the first step towards improving resident outcomes. This road map aims to support teams participating in the Residents First collaboratives and other quality improvement (QI) projects focused on building a foundation of Consistency of Assignment to support their quality of service delivery.

Consistent Assignment (also known as permanent assignment) refers to the same PSW caregivers consistently caring for the same residents when they are on duty. Some nursing homes use rotating assignments with the belief that it offers advantages, yet the research does not support this belief. In fact, low staff morale and burnout is exacerbated by rotating assignments.

The good news is that you can switch to consistency of PSW assignment! But how do you get there from here? Here's your road map.

2. The Benefits to Your Residents

This road map will guide you to your destination of making quality improvements by shifting to Consistency of Assignment. As in any journey, you must be prepared for stops or possible detours along the way. You will need to refer back to the map throughout the journey to help maintain your focus and keep you on track.

By following this road map, you can achieve a number of benefits for your residents. Here are some examples:

- Reduce the number of PSWs assigned to each resident, towards a target of no more than 8 PSWs per month.
- Improve work practices to establish Consistent Assignment for continuity of care.
- Improve interdisciplinary team approaches to care – improve staff awareness of resident needs and changes in condition.
- Improve resident centred care, continuity of care and caregiver, and the development of therapeutic relationships by implementing a Consistent Assignment staffing model.
- Improved resident sense of comfort and security.

3. The Journey to Consistency of PSW Assignment

3.1 Assembling Your Team

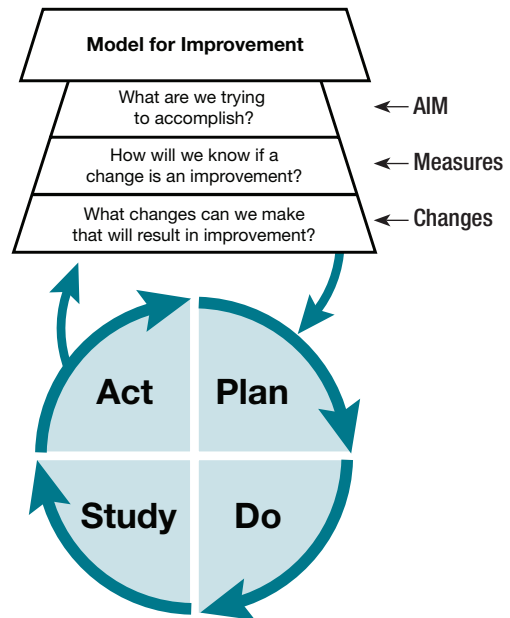
Quality improvement is a team effort. So, you have to start by assembling your team. You may want to include those who can bring energy and commitment to your team. You may already have administrative teams in place, and you may want to add representatives from nursing and PSWs as you transition to consistency of PSW assignment.

It is recommended that you include someone with training in quality improvement facilitation so they can support you on your journey.

Navigation Checklist

Consider these questions as you are starting out and remember to reflect on them throughout your journey.

1. What are you trying to accomplish?
2. How will you know a change is an improvement?
3. What changes can you make that could lead to an improvement?



Your team is your vehicle.

Your team will plan and implement the improvement to fit the context of your home by:

- gathering baseline measures;
- conducting small-scale tests of change using PDSA, “Think BIG, test SMALL;”
- studying outcomes of changes before planning next action steps; and
- helping successful changes become standard practices and lessons learned.

Quality improvement flourishes when there is support from the leadership to:

- guide, support and encourage the improvement team; and
- ensure the sustainability of the team’s effective changes.

3.2 Setting A Course for a Specific Destination

It is important for you to be very clear on the specific goals you are trying to achieve regarding Consistency of PSW Assignment in your LTC home. First, consider your current circumstances. Then consider how you would like to improve them. Commit to achieving the improvement within a set timeframe. Set a target that will stretch your capability and make sure you keep in mind a level of improvement that will add value to residents.

Your aim is your ultimate destination.

Be sure to pinpoint your destination and establish a schedule for getting there.

The AIM of _____ (your LTC Home) is to improve Consistency of PSW Assignment by 50% towards a target of 8 PSWs per resident (from a baseline of ____ to ____ per month) by ____ (date).

3.3 Charting Your Progress

Improvements need to be measured. You need to be able to effectively track the changes that are occurring in your home and assess their impact on quality improvement.

Your measures are your signposts. There are a number of different areas that are measured in order to adequately assess the effectiveness of your efforts in improving Consistency of PSW Assignment. Measure actual outcomes as well as the processes and mitigating steps that are in place to support the transition from rotating assignment to Consistency of PSW Assignment. These additional measures will act as indicators to help flag you when you are going off the path. The chart that follows describes the most relevant outcome, process and balancing measures.

Outcome Measures

1. Average number of primary* PSWs per resident who provide care over a one month period

Process Measures

2. Percentage of staff turnover
3. Percentage of agency PSW hours each month

Balancing Measures

4. Percentage of total PSW paid hours that are paid sick hours each month

* Definition of primary PSW: The PSW who is primarily responsible for the ADLs of dressing, eating, toilet use, and personal hygiene.

4. Different Paths to Improvement

Quality Improvement involves change on many levels. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to reaching your destination. Each home is unique. It is important for your team to discuss, explore and determine changes that can be made in your home to support the shift to Consistency of PSW Assignment.

Consider your entire organization and approach to caring for residents to look for changes that can be made to support improvements in this transition.

The following table sets out possible areas of focus and steps that you may want to take on your journey towards quality improvement.

Recognition and Assessment	Suggested Steps
<p><i>Identify Consistency of PSW Assignment as an area for potential improvement in performance and practice.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine baseline measures related to Consistent Assignment. • Use each home area assignment sheet to gather baseline data for whole home. (Human Resource quality measures, staff and resident survey results). • Determine area's for improvement/change ideas in current processes and practices related to Consistent Assignment. • Identify trends and patterns that influence staffing (resident home areas, resident populations, staff populations, shifts, weekdays, weekends, holidays). • Identify potential barriers (availability, retention, turn over, budget, compensation/benefits).
Engaging Residents and Families	Suggested Steps
<p><i>Share information with residents and families and engage them in the transition process.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider staffing model to be flexible with residents' individual needs, wishes, and preferences, yet meets operational staffing requirement. • Consider family input related to staffing model. • Evaluate resident and family satisfaction using regular satisfaction survey. • Conduct individual resident interviews, as appropriate.

Care Planning for Prevention

Suggested Steps

An Action Plan will support the LTC Home to move forward in meeting their goals related to Consistency of PSW Assignment of direct caregivers.

- Develop an action plan for achieving Consistent Assignment.

A well developed communication plan supports optimal continuity of care.

- Communicate action plan to staff, residents and families (action plan goals, timeframes) for feedback
- Communicate new staffing requirements/adjustments at change of shift.
- Support the development and integration of communication tools. (Example 24 hour report)
- Include resident/staff Consistent Assignment into discussion at all admission care conferences and annual care conferences.

Improving Work Flow

Suggested Steps

Education on the impact of Consistent Assignment will enhance the development of Consistent Assignment practices.

- Educate staff at regular intervals related to positive impact of continuity of care on quality of life for residents and quality of work life for staff, home staffing/replacement practices and relevant policies.

Organizational support for delivery of safe, competent, culturally sensitive and ethical care by maximizing continuity of care and continuity of care givers.

- Nurse leaders are fair and equitable in their planning of Consistent Assignment of PSW for resident care based on relative needs to care for each resident.
- Decision making responsibilities require financial and human resource utilization of nursing staff in order to achieve Consistent Assignment for PSWs.
- Nurse Leaders create optimal balance between the resident care needs and Consistent Assignment decisions considering the PSW's preferences and recognizing contractual obligations and human resources policies.

Improving Work Flow *(cont.)*

Suggested Steps

- Nurse leaders to determine resident assignment and balanced workload assignment while considering preferences of PSWs.
- Identify resources and evidence based research to support Consistent Assignment approach to care.
- Develop or review policy in your LTC home to ensure it reflects changes related to Consistency of PSW Assignment in order to achieve continuity of care.
- Review role and responsibilities of each healthcare provider.

Developing Routine Practices

Suggested Steps

Evaluation of the Action Plan will contribute to consistency and improvement of routine practices.

- Consider a mutual commitment to Consistent Assignment with collective bargaining units.
- Communicate new staffing requirements/adjustments at change of shift. Support the development and integration of communication tools. (Example 24 hour report).
- Test “Huddles” with the interdisciplinary team to identify any required changes to the assignment that may improve continuity of care.
- Monitor to ensure the PSW assigned to resident is also primary caregiver.

Designing Systems to Avoid Mistakes

Suggested Steps

A workplace culture where residents, families and staff can communicate suggestions and concerns.

- Establish Consistent Assignment improvement team.
- LTC Homes support a culture of empowerment to enable nurses to have responsibility and demonstrate accountability in creating PSW staff Consistent Assignments.
- LTC organizations 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.
- Nurse leaders lead and sustain change related to carrying out the action plan for Consistent Assignment.
- Nurse leaders balance competing values and priorities for Consistent Assignment in changing situations (Example: outbreak, acute change in condition).
- Nurse leaders respond to staff work/life considerations and work preferences when planning Consistent Assignment for PSWs.
- Use a PDSA approach to evaluating all tests of change.
- Collect, report and analyze data for learning.
- Establish a forum to review feedback, learning about changes and improvements to Consistent Assignment in your LTC home (staff meeting, councils, huddles, newsletters, email notices).

5. Navigation Support

Here are some resources that may be of assistance to you on your quality improvement journey.

Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes: Implementation Guide Improving Consistent Assignment of Nursing Home Staff

http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/files/impguides/2_ConsistentAssignment_TAW_Guide.pdf

RNAO Best Practice Guidelines: Developing and Sustaining Effective Staffing and Workload Practices

http://www.rnao.org/Storage/35/2935_BPG_Staffing_Workload.pdf

RNAO Best Practice Guideline: Developing and Sustaining Nursing Leadership

http://www.rnao.org/Storage/16/1067_BPG_Sustain_Leadership.pdf

RNAO Best Practice Guideline: Client Centred Care

http://www.rnao.org/Storage/15/932_BPG_CCCare_Rev06.pdf

http://www.rnao.org/Storage/15/933_BPG_CCCare_Supplement.pdf

RNAO Best Practice Guideline Toolkit Client Centred Care

<http://tctoolkit.rnao.ca/resources/client-centred-care>

RNAO Best Practice Client Centred Care E-Learning Program

<http://clientcentredcare.rnao.ca/login.php>

RNAO Best Practice Guideline Establishing Therapeutic Relationships

http://www.rnao.org/Storage/15/936_BPG_TR_Rev06.pdf

http://www.rnao.org/Storage/15/943_BPG_TR_Supplement.pdf

6. Conclusion

Congratulations! Now that you have taken this journey and reached your destination, you are ready to celebrate. Quality improvement is a continuous journey, and there is another destination waiting for you. You may choose to:

- reset your aim using the same topic and resident group;
- spread your success on this topic to a new resident group; and/or
- choose a new topic area of focus.

This is also a good opportunity to remind your team that you now have quality improvement tools and skills that you can direct to any improvement efforts in your home!

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Appendix: Paths to Improvement At a Glance

The diagram which follows offer guidance on areas where change should be discussed and considered and possible steps to engage in order to bring these quality improvement changes to life.

Recognition and Assessment	Engage Residents/Family	Care Planning for Prevention	Improve Work Flow	Develop routine practices/Standardize	Design Systems to avoid mistakes
Identify potential for improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine baseline measures • Identify trends/patterns and barriers 	Consider resident and family input re: staffing model Evaluate resident and family satisfaction Use a resident centred care approach to develop staffing model	Develop action plan for achieving Consistent Assignment Communicate for feedback Include resident Consistent Assignment topic in care conferences	Provide regular education for consist assignment Use fair and equitable planning of Consistent Assignment Build financial considerations; ie, reduced sick time Consider workload distribution for PSW staff Identify roles and responsibilities of each staff member Develop and review policy for Consistent Assignment	Collaborate with stakeholders and collective bargaining units Communicate staffing changes at change of shift Develop communication tools Test Huddles with interdisciplinary team to identify any required changes to assignment Monitor to ensure PSW assigned is primary PSW care giver	Establish Consistent Assignment improvement team Establish a culture that supports Consistent Assignment Establish roles and responsibilities for nurse leaders related to effective scheduling and assignment practices Use PDSA approach to evaluate tests of change Collect, report and analyze for learning Establish a forum to review feedback

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