



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
OFFICE OF LONG TERM LIVING

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Over the last year and a half, Nursing Home Transition (NHT) has been operating in Pennsylvania with considerable success. During that period, over 400 consumers were transitioned to the community. The cooperation of the nursing facility industry has been a critical component of the success of the program, and I would like to express my appreciation to you and your staff.

As you may recall from the recent nursing facility case mix regulation discussions, nursing facility transition and balancing long term living are priorities for the Commonwealth. I am writing today to inform you about an enhancement to nursing facility transition that will build on the success we have achieved together.

One of the most important lessons we have learned from NHT activities to date is that early identification and education is critical for a successful transition. Therefore, we are implementing the Long Term Living (LTL) counseling function to provide information and education to newly admitted nursing facility consumers.

The new nursing facility case mix regulations include the requirement to submit Minimum Data Set (MDS) data for admissions within seven days of completing an admission assessment. This MDS data will be used to identify nursing facility admissions so it is very important in our LTL counseling efforts.

The LTL Counseling function will be performed by Area Agency on Aging (AAA) staff, using this MDS data with the goal of educating individuals within 30 days of admission to the facility. This is the same function that each AAA currently performs when the resident is being assessed for Medicaid eligibility; the difference is in the timing and intensity of the counseling. Providing education and information at this early stage will ensure that consumers and their families or caregivers have the information they need to make the appropriate choice about how they receive their long term care services.

As you know the alternative placement incentive is one of the areas where we will be having further conversations with the nursing facility industry with a target implementation date of no later than July 1, 2008. The enhanced NHT is one of our efforts to assist nursing facilities to prepare for the alternative placement incentive.

The AAA in your county will be contacting your facility within the next few weeks to set up a meeting to explain Long Term Living Counseling and to coordinate resident visits. Once again thank you for your cooperation and I appreciate your ongoing assistance as we work together to build a balanced long term living system in PA.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Brady

cc: Area Agency on Aging Directors; DPW Office of Long Term Living; NHT Partners;
Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging