

Early Recognition of Declining Residents in Long-term Care Facility

Abstract

Long-term care facilities have a responsibility to ensure that nursing staff have the knowledge, skills and ability to evaluate a resident with a change in condition to determine transfer to a higher level of care. Readmission of a long-term care resident to a higher level of care within 30-days of discharge from acute care negatively impacts resident convalescence and financial reimbursement for services. Principles from Ray's Theory of Bureaucratic Caring support development of a guideline for early recognition of declining residents (ERDR Guideline). The guideline incorporates facility policy with evidence-based evaluation tools supporting staff determination of need for transfer through nursing care processes for a change in resident condition. Facility staff received education including directed use of the guideline compliance with skills validation, leading to appropriate decision-making related to prompt intervention to remain at the facility or resident transfer. Post-implementation findings indicated a 43% decrease in transfers comparing November of 2017 and November of 2018 facility data.