

# 10 Ways to Improve Your Pain Quality Measure Score

- 1. Understand the Quality Measure.** Coding for pain on the MDS should not be automatic when meds are given to prevent pain rather than waiting for the resident to complain of pain.
- 2. Pain is everyone's responsibility.** Educate everyone (all staff, residents, family, volunteers, etc.) to consider every resident for risk of pain, to learn to recognize pain and to know the process to report pain.
- 3. Make pain the 5<sup>th</sup> vital sign.** Screen for pain daily, upon admission, with every MDS, and with any change in behavior or condition. Also, be sure to ask questions using various synonyms for pain like discomfort and aching.
- 4. Use a consistent pain assessment scale** that addresses location, intensity, duration, what improves and worsens pain, and response to any treatment. Document and communicate your findings consistently.
- 5. Know your residents.** Observe and document baseline behaviors in every resident including the cognitively impaired. Pain can sometimes be disguised as behavioral issues in the elders.
- 6. Aggressively review PRN pain medication usage** for each resident and change to a *regularly scheduled medication* when there is a pattern of consistent PRN pain medication usage.
- 7. Prevent pain or reduce pain** by giving pain medication before an activity, therapy, treatments such as wound care, or after a fall.
- 8. Learn what pharmacological and non-pharmacological pain treatments work for each individual resident.** Non-pharmacological treatments such as range of motion exercise, heat therapy, whirlpool, art/music therapy, etc. may reduce the dosage or frequency of pharmacological treatments.
- 9. Consult physician, resident, family and staff** in pain management and care planning. Monitor, evaluate and document the effects of the pain interventions.
- 10. Use best practices in pain management** such as the Illinois Foundation for Quality Health Care's Pain Collaborative Barriers and Successes document.

**Visit The Illinois Foundation for Quality Health Care's Web site at [www.ifqhc.org](http://www.ifqhc.org) for resources to assist with your Quality Improvement efforts.**



ILLINOIS FOUNDATION FOR  
QUALITY HEALTH CARE

2625 Butterfield Road, Suite 102E  
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523-1234  
(800) 386-6431 • FAX (630) 571-5611  
[www.ifqhc.org](http://www.ifqhc.org)