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Pressure Sores: A Serious Consequence for the Elderly
*Illinois Foundation for Quality Health Care Assists Nursing Homes
in Reducing Pressure Sore Rates*

OAK BROOK, Ill., August 9, 2007 – The Illinois Foundation for Quality Health Care (IFQHC) partnered with 92 nursing homes throughout the state, over an 18-month period, in an ongoing effort to improve the quality of care for nursing home residents. One of the main emphases in this endeavor was the reduction of pressure sores. Pressure sores are painful skin lesions caused by unrelieved pressure, usually around bony areas. If not properly treated, they can lead to infection and destroy healthy tissue, muscle and bone.

Approximately two-thirds of the 92 homes working with IFQHC succeeded on improving the prevention and treatment of pressure sores, also known as bedsores. The results meant that about 3,000 residents had an improved quality of life due to a lower incidence of pressure sores and improved preventive measures being implemented in their nursing homes. Quality improvement activities were initiated to improve the performance on the federally reported High Risk Pressure Sore Quality Measure (QM). This QM reflects the percent of high risk residents who have pressure sores after admission or have not completely healed since the last assessment.

IFQHC's training was based on an interdisciplinary team approach, which utilized a Model of Improvement known as Deming's Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle, a proven problem-solving system. Nursing staff at each location engaged in a series of team meetings, developed action plans and completed educational training sessions, which focused on pressure sore prevention and management. The elements of pressure sore prevention and management include but are not limited to:

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- An organizational commitment to pressure sore prevention and treatment
- Ongoing staff education and training
- Timely completion of a pressure sore assessment to identify high risk residents
- Developing a prevention program based on accepted best practice guidelines

“We are very proud of the nursing homes’ achievements regarding the reduction of pressure sores and we would like to congratulate these homes on their dedication,” stated IFQHC Nursing Home Manager Benneta Sevier. “The reduction of pressure ulcers continues to improve as more nursing homes adopt lessons learned and change the culture within each location.”

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Located in Oak Brook, Ill., IFQHC is the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for the state of Illinois. QIOs work with physicians and health care professionals to promote high quality medical care for Medicare beneficiaries. IFQHC is contracted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to perform designated quality improvement activities with healthcare providers across Illinois. For more information on IFQHC, visit our Web site at www.ifqhc.org.