



golden  
living

# Quality Highlights

FIRST QUARTER 2009

## A Focus on Quality

*Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Golden Living “Quality Highlights” newsletter. In these pages we present a sampling of the many quality initiatives and programs that Golden Living is undertaking throughout our family of companies — including Golden LivingCenters, Aegis Therapies and AseraCare Hospice and Home Health.*

*The Golden Living culture is centered around quality. It is the standard by which we want our employees to judge their actions and make decisions. If it is the right thing to do for the patient — then it is the right decision. At Golden Living, we know that striving for quality care is always good business. It is what will enable us to succeed in the future.*

*Golden Living is committed to continuous quality improvement. Our goal is to build Golden Living into the premier provider of healthcare services, with a name that is synonymous with quality.*

Neil Kurtz, M.D.  
President and CEO, Golden Living

## Golden Living Receives 57 AHCA/NCAL Quality Awards in 2008

### Industry Recognition Validates Golden Living Quality

Fifty-seven Golden LivingCenters were selected by the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) to receive AHCA/NCAL Step I and II Quality Awards in 2008 — more than any other company. Fifty-one LivingCenters earned Step I awards and six LivingCenters earned the difficult-to-achieve Step II award.

To be selected for one of the independently judged awards, nursing homes must show an extraordinary ongoing commitment to quality care for their patients, as measured against specific criteria. The AHCA/NCAL Quality Awards are designed to recognize quality achievement, while supporting improvement efforts in long-term care through the promotion of education and awareness.

“Golden Living is honored to receive this special distinction of quality in 57 of our LivingCenters across the country,” said Larry Deans, President of Golden LivingCenters. “We take great pride in continuously maintaining and increasing the level of quality in all of our Golden LivingCenters.”

# Measuring Up

## Golden Living Exceeds Industry Averages, Improves on Key CMS Quality Measures

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) uses a series of metrics to evaluate how well a nursing home is caring for its patients. These quality measures assess the patient's physical and clinical conditions and abilities. The measures come from assessment data that nursing homes routinely collect on patients during their stay.

Several key areas are measured — including pressure sores, incontinence, pain and weight loss, among others. A low percentage of patients who exhibit these conditions is one indicator that the nursing home is doing a good job of caring for its patients' physical and clinical needs.

Golden Living prides itself on meeting or exceeding industry averages in key CMS quality measures. More important, Golden Living strives to improve its own performance in key measures year-over-year. Over the last three years, Golden Living has improved in the following areas:

- Fewer patients who need help with daily activities
- Fewer patients who have moderate to severe pain
- Fewer low-risk patients who are incontinent
- Less use of catheters
- Improved patient mobility
- Fewer high-risk patients with pressure sores
- Fewer short-stay patients with pressure sores



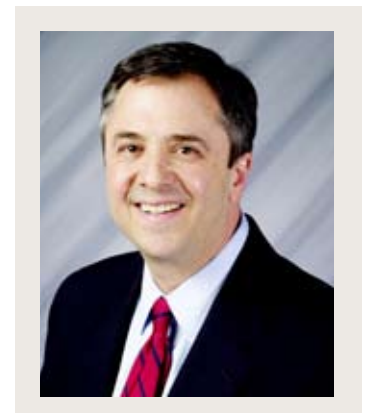
## Renowned Physician Joins Golden Living as Chief Medical Officer

Renowned geriatrics physician–leader and author James Avery, M.D., has been named Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Golden Living.

“Dr. Avery brings to this important role a brilliant combination of geriatric healthcare knowledge and operational excellence that will help us become the nation's leading provider of quality, outcomes-based care for older Americans,” said Neil Kurtz, M.D., President and CEO of Golden Living. “He is a man of enormous integrity with a passionate commitment to geriatric care and quality of life issues, and we are honored to have him join our company.”

As Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Avery will be instrumental in helping Golden Living provide superior quality medical, nursing and therapy services to its patients and residents. He has clinical responsibility and oversight across all

Golden Living businesses. He is responsible for redefining the role and significantly strengthening the effectiveness of the Medical Directors and attending physicians who work with Golden Living.



Dr. Avery is charged with identifying opportunities that improve Golden Living's clinical outcomes as well as helping the organization implement quality-of-care improvements. He plans to build upon the company's patient-centric approach to care and disease management throughout the organization.

# New CMS Five-Star Quality Rating System Will Assist Consumers

## Golden LivingCenters Receive High Marks

In a “game changing” move by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), a new nursing home rating system has been launched. Under the new system, nursing homes are assigned star ratings from a low of one star to a high of five stars based on health inspection surveys, staffing information and quality-of-care measures. The ratings are publicly available on the CMS Nursing Home Compare Web site at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

“Choosing a nursing home is one of the most difficult and sometimes confusing decisions families have to make,” said Andrea Clark, Senior Vice President of Clinical Services for Golden Living. “The new CMS Quality Rating System and Nursing Home Compare Web site will be an important tool in providing guidance and comparison information when deciding on a nursing home.

“It’s important to remember, however, that the CMS Web site is just one of many sources of information that people should evaluate,” Clark added. “Families also should speak with their physician and visit the nursing home for themselves.”

Golden Living has performed well in the initial ratings under the new CMS system — receiving a higher percentage of five-star ratings than industry average and ranking higher overall than all major for-profit nursing home companies based on average scores. More than a third of the 327 Golden LivingCenters received a four- or five-star rating.



 HomeCare Elite

## Five AseraCare Home Health Agencies Achieve Elite Status

AseraCare Home Health agencies in Omaha, Neb.; Milwaukee; Pittsburgh; Ocala, Fla., and Tarpon Springs, Fla., have been selected to be included among the HomeCare Elite as designated by OCS, Inc., a Seattle-based post-acute healthcare information company. Using publicly available information, OCS identifies the most successful Medicare-certified home healthcare providers in the United States whose performance measures in quality outcomes, quality improvement and financial performance are in the top 25 percent of all agencies. The HomeCare Elite is the only performance recognition of its kind in the home health industry.

## Consistent Assignments Lead to Better Patient Care

### Key Initiative Under the “Advancing Excellence” Campaign

Under a new program that has been implemented at all Golden LivingCenters, patients now are regularly served by the same caregivers on each shift. This simple but effective staff scheduling change has helped patients build relationships with LivingCenter staff, and increase their comfort and confidence level. Consistent staffing also has enabled caregivers to get to know their patients’ needs better and has made it easier for caregivers to identify and report changes in patient conditions. This has helped to improve care and reduce the chance of errors or oversights.

Consistent assignment is one of the initiatives of the “Advancing Excellence in America’s Nursing Homes” campaign in which Golden Living is participating. Advancing Excellence is a coalition-based program that is reinvigorating efforts to improve the quality of care and quality of life for those living or recuperating in America’s nursing homes.

# Clinical Summit Advances Best Practices

## Clinicians Encouraged to 'Imagine the Possibilities'

Golden Living's annual Clinical Summit brings together more than 100 clinician leaders from throughout the company to explore new frontiers of medicine, technology, clinical innovation and customer expectations. The focus of the most recent two-day meeting was the future of long-term care, with the theme "*Imagine the Possibilities.*"

The summit, which featured presentations from company specialists as well as nationally recognized experts, enabled Golden Living's clinical leadership to share ideas and approaches, and work to ensure that Golden Living is meeting the future needs of its patients and residents.

Attendees explored how new technologies will impact the way in which Golden Living provides services and programs. Speakers also reinforced the importance of developing and training a staff that shares the company's commitment to improving the lives of others.

"Our Clinical Summit provided everyone in attendance with a fresh perspective on our unique vision of long-term care," said Andrea Clark, Senior Vice President of Clinical Services. "It was an intensive learning experience that will enable us to advance clinical best practices throughout our organization, and change the way people view senior healthcare."

## Clinical Training Is Key to Continuous Quality Improvement

### Directors of Clinical Education Ensure Best Practices at Golden LivingCenters

To reinforce Golden Living's commitment to clinical excellence and quality, the company has established a dedicated training position at each of its LivingCenters. The company employs 222 full-time Directors of Clinical Education (DCE), who are registered nurses. Some DCEs serve more than one LivingCenter.

DCEs are responsible for implementing training and certification programs for nurses, certified nursing assistants and other healthcare staff to ensure knowledge and execution of evidenced-based practices. In addition, the DCEs are responsible for validating nursing competencies and supporting education to strengthen nursing skills.

### New Program Improves Diabetes Management

Diabetes affects more than 45 percent of the residents in a typical nursing home. This number is expected to increase sharply in the coming years as Americans live longer and the number of Americans turning to long-term care accelerates.

Golden Living has implemented a new training and education program for all of its nurses to more effectively

address the needs of patients with diabetes and provide improved care. The scope of the program includes knowledge from a wide range of healthcare specialties including dietetics, pharmacology, social services and all levels of nursing. The training program focuses on improving knowledge and understanding of diabetes, nutrition, oral and injected medications, avoiding hypoglycemia, and skin and lower-extremity care.

### Aegis Therapies e-Learning Program Keeps Therapists Up-to-Date

Ongoing training is critical for physical, occupational and speech-language therapists to remain current on best practices and new programs. However, taking time away from patients to attend classes is difficult — especially when therapists are in such high demand.

Aegis Therapies has solved this dilemma by developing a web-based online training program for its more than 6,000 therapists. First launched in 2007, the Aegis e-learning library currently contains seven courses representing more than 42 hours of training. This allows consistent delivery of content while minimizing therapists' non-treatment time and eliminating travel time and expense. Aegis is adding four new courses to the library in 2009.

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