



golden  
living

# Quality Highlights

SECOND QUARTER 2009

## AseraCare *HeartMatters* Program Helps Hospice Patients

Heart disease is the number-one killer of Americans and causes more deaths than all cancers combined. Studies also show that hospice patients with end-stage heart disease suffer more than hospice patients with terminal cancer.

To educate patients, their families and caregivers about the best options for managing end-stage heart disease, AseraCare Hospice has created a new clinical program called AseraCare *HeartMatters*. Developed in collaboration with cardiac specialists, nurses and hospice clinicians, AseraCare *HeartMatters* will be used to help hospice staff learn how to minimize the effects of end-stage heart disease. Cardiac patients and their loved ones will benefit by having caregivers fully versed in the unique aspects of this disease and the special needs of patients.

## Golden Living Takes Quick Action to Prepare for H1N1 Flu

By Neil Kurtz, M.D. • President and CEO

Our company is deeply concerned about the current public health emergency in the United States due to the spreading H1N1 influenza A (swine flu) outbreak and the impact it may have, especially on our senior patients. Given the seriousness of this situation, Golden Living has taken quick and decisive action to protect our patients and staff at all of the Golden Living companies — including Aegis Therapies, AseraCare Hospice, AseraCare Home Health and Golden LivingCenters.

We are closely monitoring developments with the swine flu outbreak, and we are taking the necessary precautions to protect our patients — whether they are in our LivingCenters, or being served by Aegis therapists at non-affiliated facilities, or being cared for by our AseraCare staff in the patient's home.

We have brought together a leadership group that is working aggressively to make sure our company effectively addresses the challenges of this situation. Additionally, our company has retained a recognized expert on Infectious Diseases to provide guidance in handling contagious diseases such as swine flu.

While no one can ever predict a specific outbreak like swine flu, Golden Living has been preparing for a highly contagious outbreak like this for a number of years. We have plans in place and ready to use in dealing with the various known aspects of such a public health emergency.

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We have provided our LivingCenters and AseraCare hospice and home health agencies with a number of tools and guidance on how best to respond to the outbreak. We also have taken steps to ensure that adequate medical supplies are available. Strict hand washing and other appropriate procedures are being enforced and reviewed with all staff as well as with family members and friends who visit our LivingCenters.

We will continue to take additional measures to safeguard our patients and staff as we learn more about the virus and its impact across the country and in our communities.



## Aegis e-Learning Courses Keep Therapists Up-to-Date

Training therapists on the latest clinical protocols and best practices is critical for ensuring the best patient outcomes. But finding time to attend classes often is difficult for busy therapists.

Aegis Therapies has come up with a great solution for keeping therapists up-to-date without requiring much time away from patients. The Aegis e-Learning Library is a collection of online training programs that provides therapists with easy access to essential information and the latest techniques. Response to the programs has been overwhelmingly favorable. Staff appreciate the convenience and flexibility of accessing courses online.

Aegis currently has eight online courses and continues to grow the e-Learning Library. Mostly recently, courses in balance, continence and dementia management along with a primer on geriatric strength training were added to the clinical training curriculum. Courses already online include an orientation for new hires, the essentials of quality documentation, and classes on annual required compliance training and service excellence programs.

In the third and fourth quarters of 2009, Aegis will roll out an additional five courses in complex disease management, wound care, pain management, clinical care planning and modality basics for the e-Learning Library. The Aegis e-Learning Library will continue to grow to help keep staff knowledgeable about the latest rehabilitation and wellness developments.



# Golden LivingCenters Earn ‘Excellence in Action’ Awards

Employee job satisfaction has a direct impact on quality of care. As a result, Golden Living works hard to keep employees satisfied through job enrichment programs, training, opportunities for advancement and a pleasant work environment. Likewise, the company strives for a high degree of patient and family satisfaction by providing exceptional service.

Eight Golden LivingCenters have been honored with the “Excellence in Action” award for their success in creating employee and resident satisfaction. Granted to only a small number of nursing homes annually by My InnerView, an independent research company, the award recognizes facilities that achieve high levels of excellence as demonstrated by having high overall customer or workforce satisfaction scores.

Golden Living uses My InnerView to administer and tabulate annual customer and employee satisfaction surveys for its LivingCenters. These surveys show how the company is doing at individual LivingCenters, and help benchmark performance against other companies.

Nursing homes that receive the “Excellence in Action” award for family and resident satisfaction must have a high percentage of people rating them as “excellent” on the question: “What is your recommendation of this facility to others?”

Nursing homes that receive the award for employee satisfaction must have a high percentage of staff rating them as “excellent” on the question: “What is your recommendation of this facility as a place to work?”

## Golden LivingCenters receiving the “Excellence in Action” award this year are:

### Family and resident satisfaction

**Golden LivingCenter – Arlington in Arlington, S.D. • Golden LivingCenter – Continental Manor in Abbotsford, Wis.  
Golden LivingCenter – Court Manor in Ashland, Wis. • Golden LivingCenter – Glasgow in Glasgow, Mo.  
Golden LivingCenter – Golden Age in Tomahawk, Wis. • Golden LivingCenter – York Terrace in Pottsville, Pa.**

### Employee satisfaction

**Golden LivingCenter – Rome in Rome, Ga. • Golden LivingCenter – Thomasville in Thomasville, Ga.**

## New Program Helps Ensure Medication Safety

Avoiding medication errors is critical — especially with the elderly who may be taking multiple prescriptions. Medication safety is a major area of focus for Golden Living.

To ensure that patients receive the proper type and dose of medication, Golden Living has implemented a Medication Safety Program. The program is based on a comprehensive analysis of the issues surrounding medication safety and causes of the most common medication errors.

Among other findings, the analysis revealed that three types of drugs in particular — insulin, warfarin and narcotic analgesics — are the most prone to higher risks if errors are made. The new program helps educate caregivers about the potential dangers of these drugs and shows them how to take extra precautions when dealing with each one.

In addition, Golden Living Directors of Clinical Education conducted a 72-hour “Medication Safety Blitz.” This intensive review of safety protocols helped to raise awareness of medication safety and keep it top-of-mind among LivingCenter staff.

Golden Living also is working to improve and simplify the process for reporting medication errors, and educating staff on the importance of timely and accurate reporting. The new reporting system allows LivingCenters to use data from error reports to improve processes and measure improvement.

The education component of the program is supported by a monthly newsletter — called *Safety Caps* — that keeps nursing staff informed about medication safety issues.

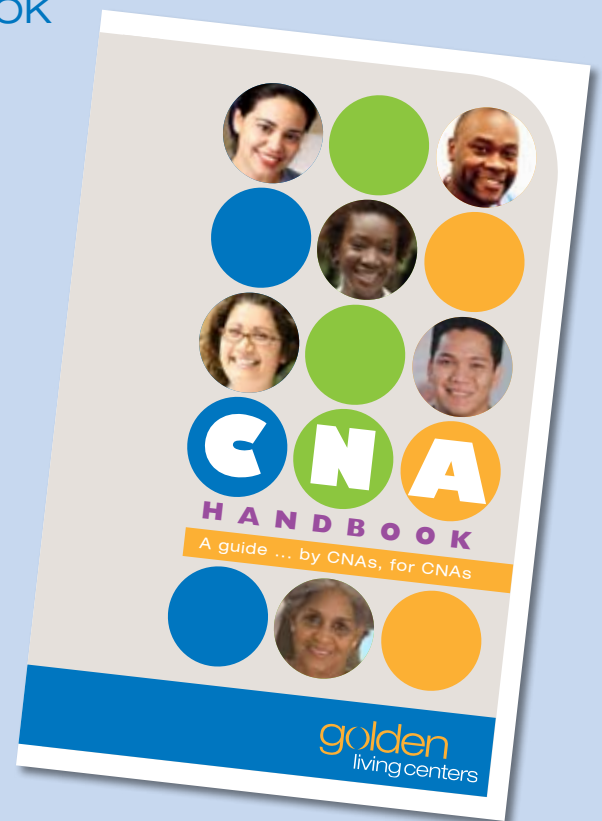
## Certified Nursing Assistants Share Their Knowledge in Training Handbook

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) play a vital role on the Golden LivingCenter clinical team. The invaluable services they provide include observing and reporting changes in resident conditions, encouraging residents to become more independent and administering compassion as they render care. The relationships they build with each of their residents, and the daily care they provide, keep each person connected to the world and create meaningful quality of life.

To help newly hired CNAs “learn the ropes,” a new handbook has been developed by CNAs for CNAs. This easy-to-read yet comprehensive guide compiles words of wisdom and real-world advice from experienced caregivers who offered to share their knowledge and experience with new staff.

The handbook not only covers caregiving procedures, it also deals with topics like stress management, ways that incoming caregivers can establish trust with their residents, and the importance of honesty and ethics in the daily life of a CNA.

This little book will go a long way in helping new CNAs feel welcome and get up-to-speed quickly.



## Therapy Program Addresses Urinary Incontinence

It's a quiet but serious healthcare problem. It costs the long-term care industry nearly \$20 billion a year. It's a problem seldom discussed, yet it affects approximately two-thirds of nursing home residents in America. The problem is urinary incontinence (UI).

Fortunately UI is a health condition that can be managed — and in some cases cured. Aegis Therapies and Golden LivingCenters have jointly created an integrated clinical program that not only improves the quality of life for UI sufferers, it also eases the burden on healthcare workers.

Working with the patient's physician, Aegis therapists and LivingCenter clinical team members determine the problems

contributing to the patient's UI through a healthcare assessment. By analyzing a patient's diet, medications, muscle strength and mobility, a UI problem can be treated.

Patients are taught simple exercises to strengthen hip, abdomen and pelvic muscles for bladder support. Electrotherapy can be used to trigger the nerves and help retrain pelvic floor muscles to work properly.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) recommends a therapy approach for patients with UI before using drugs or surgery to treat bladder control problems.

Golden Living • 1000 Fianna Way • Fort Smith, AR 72919 • 877-823-8375  
[www.goldenliving.com](http://www.goldenliving.com)

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