

Reducing Acute Care Hospitalization Toolkit

#4



CIMRO
of NEBRASKA

Resources for better healthcare

Reducing Acute Care Hospitalization Toolkit #4

Toolkit Contents:

1. Leadership Roles in Quality Improvement (QI) - A Self-Assessment Tool
2. Most Important Characteristics of Homecare Leaders
3. Tips for Leading Change
4. The Leader as a Facilitator of Change
5. The Secret Blend for Effective Leadership
6. Reducing Avoidable Acute Care Hospitalizations – Barriers and Strategies
7. Sample Physician Letter

Tools available from CIMRO of Nebraska Web site – www.cimronebraska.org

1. Sample Physician Letter
2. Reducing Avoidable Acute Care Hospitalizations – Barriers and Strategies
3. Ready, Aim, Improve Tools for Acute Care Hospitalization (*contains patient self-management tools for diabetes, lung disease and surgical wounds*)

Leadership Roles in Quality Improvement (QI) A Self-Assessment Tool

Listed below are statements that describe behaviors that leaders and managers often engage in. Indicate how frequently you engage in these behaviors by assigning a number (1-7) to each statement below (1 indicating very infrequently and 7 being very frequently):

1 = Very Infrequently and 7 = Very Frequently

	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	I am an active participant on a QI team or initiative.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I coach staff who are struggling with QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I design QI learning opportunities for staff who want to learn more about QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I seriously consider input from staff regarding QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I talk about QI all the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I demonstrate commitment and support for QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I tell inspirational stories to staff regarding QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I show passion for QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	I encourage staff to participate on QI teams.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	I provide needed time for QI activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	I make certain that staff have appropriate QI training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I help staff get access to needed QI resources.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	I provide feedback to staff regarding how well the agency is doing with respect to QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	I show staff gaps between the level of quality desired and actual quality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	I have objective measures to monitor QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	I demonstrate a positive attitude toward change efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	I show empathy and concern in dealing with staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	I reward staff efforts to improve quality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	I openly express approval of staff who make an effort toward QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	I celebrate small staff successes with respect to QI.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Leadership Roles in Quality Improvement Self-Assessment Tool Scoring

Record the numbers you assigned to each self-assessment question into the appropriate blanks below. Total the scores under each role and then divide by four to get an average for each category.

Role Model

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

#4 _____

Total: _____

Average: _____

Visionary

#5 _____

#6 _____

#7 _____

#8 _____

Total: _____

Average: _____

Change Agent

#13 _____

#14 _____

#15 _____

#16 _____

Total: _____

Average: _____

Enabler

#9 _____

#10 _____

#11 _____

#12 _____

Total: _____

Average: _____

Heart Encourager

#17 _____

#18 _____

#19 _____

#20 _____

Total: _____

Average: _____

Interpretation of the Results

In general, roles in which you have averaged a score of five or above are your most preferred roles. Roles with a score of 3 or below are your least preferred. The roles offer a general starting point by which you can examine your values and skills as a manager and leader with respect to Quality Improvement (QI) within these principles. It is your responsibility to assess your effectiveness as a QI leader based on these results and identify opportunities for ongoing growth in your leadership development.

By doing this self-assessment together with your QI team members, and sharing your results, you can realize the strengths your team has to make your QI efforts effective. It can be a good tool to use for team development.

Leadership QI Self-Assessment

Leadership Styles	Survey # at our agency	Common Characteristics	Comments
Visionary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Charismatic ▪ Big picture thinker ▪ Sense of mission ▪ Creative ▪ Independent ▪ Achiever 	
Enabler		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourager ▪ Cares for all members of the team ▪ Involvement ▪ Delegate ▪ Teamwork ▪ Encourages the team to accomplish 	
Role Model		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Values ▪ Belief in what they are doing ▪ Trusting ▪ Willing to demonstrate personal sacrifice ▪ Teamwork ▪ Faithful 	
Change Agent		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Motivation ▪ Energy ▪ Clear communicator ▪ Observes problems and barriers ▪ Drives change ▪ Uses metaphors as examples 	
Heart Encourager		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognizes and celebrates the best in everyone ▪ Shares their passion ▪ Celebrates successes 	

Most Important Characteristics of Homecare Leaders

1. Seeing the Bigger Picture
 - Understands trends shaping homecare, including economic, demographic and political factors
 - Visionary

2. Clearly Communicating Directions and Expectations
 - Clearly defines the direction of the agency
 - Communicates directions and expectations to staff

3. Making Decisions
 - Makes decisions that are consistent and in line with the agency's mission and core values
 - Communicates the decisions and ensures the decisions are carried through

4. Coaching Team Members
 - Ability to provide one-on-one guidance, direction and staff education
 - Counsels and coaches staff who are having performance issues

5. Setting Priorities and Managing Time
 - Sets and communicates priorities and time management related to what is really important and in alignment with the agency's strategies, goals and objectives
 - The most effective leaders spend a significant time growing and developing staff

Tips for Leading Change

Why, What, How

You cannot motivate people to change a procedure or work system if they don't understand why it is changing, what needs to be changed and how to make the change.

- Why. Make sure staff members understand the need for change. Show them data to support the need. Also, make sure they understand the implications of not changing.
- What and how. Make sure staff know exactly what you want them to change and how to perform new best practices.

Creating an Environment for Change

Staff members come to work wanting to do a good job, but they need to be part of a system that supports their work. Individual performance and behavior change is largely governed by the system the individual works in. Staff members are more likely to support change if they have the time and energy to invest in the changes.

Do the processes and systems promote and support staff in carrying out best practices?

Does leadership support staff and identify and remove barriers that interfere with behavior change?

Organizational Readiness for Change

Successfully implementing change is easier in an organizational environment that is already employee-oriented, with a high level of trust. Assess readiness in your agency by evaluating attitudes and beliefs regarding level of trust and optimism about the work environment.

Does your agency have a history of open communication?

Does your agency share financial information?

Consistent, Continual, Effective Communication

Although resistance to change is the norm, you can counteract confusion and skepticism with effective communication. You cannot over-communicate during a time of change.

1. Develop a written communication plan.
2. Communicate the vision, mission and objectives of the change effort. Build a memorable, conceptual framework that staff members will understand.
3. Explain how these changes will affect individuals personally.
4. Communicate to all stakeholders - nurses, aides, office staff, clients and family.
5. Communicate continually and consistently throughout the entire process
6. Communicate through multiple channels (speaking, writing, video, training, focus groups, intranet and bulletin boards)
7. Communicate face-to-face to allow a two-way conversation, rather than e-mail or a bulletin board posting. People will appreciate the opportunity to discuss and ask questions and that you took the time to listen to them. Allow enough time for questions. Make it a true conversation - not just a presentation. Make leaders available to staff daily when possible.
8. Listen. The power of real listening cannot be over emphasized.
9. Don't assume that since you've communicated the changes once, that everyone will have received the message and will make the changes.

Employee Commitment to Change

To foster complete support and commitment to a change, staff who will be expected to implement the change (or who are affected by the change) must be involved in its creation, implementation and evaluation. Staff will never completely support a change they were not involved in creating. Allow for brainstorming from all levels of the organization and set clear expectations for how ideas will be used or not used. To avoid lack of motivation, and even sabotage, spend time on the front-end, rather than policing changes on the back-end.

Leadership Support for Change

Mobilize people to do great things. We each have leadership skills that can be developed and utilized regardless of our

position in an organization. "Leadership is not the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women...extraordinary things happen by liberating the leader within everyone."

What leaders do:

1. Model the behavior expected of others. Leaders let people know what they really believe and stand up for their beliefs. They are highly visible and spend time with people. They work side-by-side with colleagues and ask questions to get others to think about values and priorities.
2. Inspire a shared vision. Leaders have visions of how things can be. They are confident in their ability to make something happen and have the ability to inspire commitment from others.
3. Challenge the process. Leaders challenge the status quo. They search for opportunities to grow and seek out and recognize the good ideas of others.
4. Enable others to act. Leaders recognize that leadership is a team effort. They foster collaboration and build trust and make it possible for others to do good work. Leaders encourage a sense of personal power and ownership among all team members. They share power and never make team members feel weak, dependent or alienated.
5. Encourage the heart. Leaders demonstrate genuine acts of caring and show sincere appreciation for the contributions of their team members. They create a culture of celebration and link rewards with performance.

Sustaining Change

1. There must be dissatisfaction with the status quo (unhappiness with the current situation).
2. There must be a shared vision of what you are trying to achieve.
3. There must be an effective communication plan in place to support change.
4. Senior management must walk the talk. They must own the change and lead it.
5. There must be alignment between the strategic demands of the change to the operational demands on managers and staff. Misalignment produces mixed messages, confusion and dissatisfaction.
6. Performance measures must be used to inform management decisions.
7. The skills, knowledge and attitudes required to sustain the change need to be defined so that HR systems (recruitment, performance management, training and development and succession planning) can be focused on building new core competencies.
8. Recognition and rewards must be in place to sustain change.

Adapted from "The Leadership Challenge," Kouzes and Posner.

More Tips for Leading Change

- Continually provide coaching and teaching on the new behaviors.
- Understand the impact the changes will have on an individual's schedule, workload, time, priorities, etc.
- Determine how behaviors and attitudes will have to change to make new processes work.
- Develop people skills so that staff can communicate openly and effectively.
- Always be sure to do what you say you will do.
- Ask for feedback on any changes and acknowledge and act on feedback.
- Respond to challenges creatively.
- Reward behaviors that you want to reinforce.
- Don't denigrate the past. Be respectful – people are most likely doing the best they can do with what they know and the resources they have.
- Provide encouragement and feedback continuously along the way to maintain motivation, increase understanding of the importance of the change and to highlight the importance.
- Collect data to assess whether changes are being made, staff reactions to the changes and the impact of the changes.
- Provide time for staff to focus on improvement efforts.
- Recognize staff efforts to improve.
- Celebrate successes – allow staff to take pride in improved outcomes.
- Promote cooperation among staff. Understand changes in one area may impact another area. Promote an environment of mutual respect and encouragement. Everyone must understand the overall goals of the improvement efforts and how it impacts the overall good of the organization. Also, make sure everyone understands the common purpose.
- Minimize negative talk; focus on the positive.
- Watch your tone of voice when communicating with staff; pay attention to nonverbal behaviors, such as facial expressions, posture and gestures.
- Don't try to get staff to change by instilling fear or using threats.
- Ask for help in solving problems and making improvements.
- Show confidence in people by communicating positive expectations.
- Recognize that change is a process and happens over time. Change involves learning from confronting the obstacles we encounter. Progress is not linear.

The Leader as a Facilitator of Change

How leaders facilitate participation:

1. Specify how you want people to participate, indicating whether you want them to be active, giving ideas and feedback, asking questions and offering support or whether you just want them to listen.
2. Encourage participation and clarity in any one or more of the following ways:
 - Get input from everyone
 - Ask open-ended questions
 - Use active listening to draw people out; paraphrase; be attentive
 - Reinforce and acknowledge positive participation (both verbally and non-verbally)
 - Draw out people who have relevant expertise and those who are less involved
 - Direct questions back to the group to enable them to “own” the answers and take responsibility for the organization’s success
 - Be supportive of new ideas, partial ideas and minority views
 - Distinguish assumptions from facts
 - Use a structured activity to engage everyone as part of the team:
 - Ask one speaker to call on the next speaker
 - Specify that no person may talk a second time until everyone has talked at least once
 - Use a soft ball and roll or throw it gently to those people who have not yet spoken
 - Break the group into small subgroups (of no more than 4) and assign a task to each subgroup
 - Create your own activity
4. Feel supportive toward the group and you will act that way.
5. Remain neutral during meetings, or bring in a neutral facilitator, so you can actively participate.

How leaders manage the pace:

1. It is normal for energy to wax and wane in an organization or in a meeting, causing the pace to speed up or slow down. As a leader, you need to balance the pace so people’s energy, commitment and interest remain relatively high.
2. When the pace is too fast or too slow:
 - Make an observation about how you see the pace and ask the team if they agree with you
 - Test for completion of the agenda item or the improvement process you are working on
 - Vary your own pace
 - Break the group into small subgroups during a meeting (if appropriate to the agenda) and assign a task to each group
 - Break a large project or improvement process into smaller steps so that success can be seen more quickly and more frequently
 - Take a break, do something different, be spontaneous, celebrate an accomplishment and have fun

How a leader deals with counterproductive behavior:

1. Keep calm, feel assertive (not aggressive) and be open.
2. Provide a private space for the conversation. Use active listening techniques; paraphrase and summarize what you are hearing. Ask them to repeat back what they are hearing.
3. Look for the value in the person and their input and acknowledge it. Use “yes, and” terminology instead of “yes, but”.
4. Refer to the vision, ground rules, job responsibilities, tasks and/or desired outcomes and indicate how the behavior appears to be taking the team away from its goals; or ask the person to describe how their behavior relates to the task at hand.

5. Say what's going on. Describe the behavior and how it disrupts. Use an "I" statement: "When you (describe behavior), I feel (emotion), because (describe the task the group is working on).
6. Ask for cooperation and state what you want.
7. Use humor if appropriate.

How a leader manages differences and resolves conflict:

1. Encourage the sharing of diverse views to improve quality and creativity.
2. Ensure minority views are heard.
3. Focus on the idea rather than the person.
4. In a team meeting, suggest that each speaker paraphrase the previous speaker before presenting his or her own viewpoint.
5. Set aside a special meeting to deal directly with the conflict.
6. Learn and teach the team positive methods for resolving conflict or negotiating differences.
7. Use these steps for resolving conflict:
 - a. Define common ground, areas of agreement, common goals.
 - b. Isolate points of disagreement, asking each side to make clear statements and paraphrase everything that is said.
 - c. Brainstorm or research alternatives to reach agreed-on goals or common ground and diminish differences; allow sufficient time for alternatives to be generated and discussed.
 - d. Decide by accommodation, compromise or consensus on suitable solutions and actions. Search for the win-win solution.
 - e. Plan for the evaluation of ideas and/or solutions so that mid-course adjustments can be made.

The Secret Blend For Effective Leadership

Leadership Is Not Something You Do to People, It's Something You Do with Them

Integrity

- Leading with Integrity Means Being the Person You Want Others to Be
- Trust Is What Happens When Values and Behaviors Match Up
- People Are Most Apt to Trust and Respect You When What You Say and What You Do Are One and the Same

Partnership

- The Key to Effective Leadership Is the Relationship You Build with Your Team
- Sharing the Big Picture Puts Everyone on the Same Page
- It Is Easier to Get Up the Hill When You Climb It Together

Affirmation

- Praise Is the Easiest Way to Let People Know They Are Appreciated
- Each of Us Has the Power to Recognize the Goodness in Others
- You Will go a Lot Further If You Stop to Refuel

Perfecting The Blend

- People Will Think for Themselves When You Quit Doing It for Them
- Leadership Is the Process of Getting Everyone to the Place They are Supposed to Go
- The Highest Achievement As a Leader Is Winning the Respect and Trust of Your Team

Reducing Avoidable Acute Care Hospitalizations Barriers and Strategies

Reducing avoidable acute care hospitalizations (ACH) is a complex challenge that crosses all healthcare provider settings. The home health community is taking the lead to address this costly issue with the support of Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs).

QIOs, homecare agencies and national home health stakeholders are working together to determine and implement best practices and strategies for reducing avoidable hospitalizations. Although many agencies in the nation are implementing best practice strategies, barriers to reducing avoidable hospitalizations exist. Some of these barriers are beyond the scope of home healthcare. The home health community is rising to the challenge of reducing avoidable hospitalizations by implementing interventions to address barriers that are within their control.

The following table is the synthesis of a QIO and homecare agency input on strategies and barriers to improving ACH.

Barriers to Reducing ACH	ACH Strategic Plan QIO Strategies	Briggs Study Strategies
Acutely ill patients at high-risk for hospitalization	Front loading visits	Front loading visits
Agency feeling like they cannot refuse a referral	Strong leadership and education to physicians and discharge planners	Management culture and support
Agency lacks 24-hour coverage	Emergency contact plans/on-call nurses	24-hour availability/response program
Inappropriate homecare patients with extended lengths of stay	Case management	Case management
Acutely ill patients with poor self-management skills Increase incidence of chronic illness	Patient self-management/carepaths/ disease management programs/patient and caregiver education	Disease management Medication management Patient/caregiver education
Unable to obtain PRN orders to address potential crisis situations Physicians send patient to ER without considering home health interventions	Improve physician relationships through education and collaboration Demonstrate value of home health Improve communication	Physician relationships
Frail patient population	Fall/hospitalization risk assessments	Fall prevention safety and risk assessment
Hospital discharge planners pressured to discharge Inappropriate referrals Patients discharged from hospital too soon	Work closely with hospital discharge planners Strong relationships with referral sources Organizational culture: communication/ care coordination	Hospital relationships with discharge planning staff
Acutely ill patients with poor self-management skills Staffing shortages	Telehealth, including phone monitoring, telemonitoring and teletriage systems	Telehealth
Unable to sustain improvement	Tracking hospitalizations/analysis Monitoring Plan of Action for effectiveness	Data-driven strategies
Using ER due to easy access	Communication with emergency room staff	Hospital relationships with emergency room staff

*The "ACH Strategic Plan Quality Improvement Organizations" are defined as those QIOs that had an ACH state rate less than 25 percent at baseline. (May 2004 - April 2005 per OBQI roll-up reports.) The ACH Strategic Plan group identified their "Possibilities List" or their perceived strategies accounting for their favorable ACH state rates.

**The Briggs National Quality Improvement /Hospitalization Reduction Study, co-sponsored by the National Association for Home Care & Hospice and Fazzi Associates, examined the 10 percent of home health agencies that were most successful at reducing hospitalizations. These were defined as agencies whose average score for ACH on Home Health Compare was 19 percent or lower using the March 2005 data (December 2003 - November 2004).

©2006 Briggs® National Quality Improvement/Hospitalization Reduction Study, Sponsored by: Briggs® Corporation, NAHC and Fazzi Associates, Inc.

This material was prepared by Quality Insights of Pennsylvania.

{Insert Date}

Dear Physician Colleague,

Reducing avoidable acute care hospitalizations is a complex challenge that crosses all healthcare provider settings. Homecare agencies across the nation are taking the lead to address this costly issue. {Insert Name of Agency} is working with CIMRO of Nebraska, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization, to implement best practices and strategies to prevent avoidable hospitalizations for patients receiving homecare services. We need your support and collaboration to assist us in reducing Nebraska's rate of avoidable acute care hospitalization among your Medicare patients.

Timely and efficient communication between the homecare provider and the physician can have an enormous impact on your patient's outcomes. Homecare agencies in the state are contacting physicians with pertinent, succinct information about the patient's condition and, when appropriate, offer potential interventions that the homecare agency could provide. Here's how you can support their efforts:

- If you have standing orders for symptom management in certain situations, please share them with the homecare agencies.
- If you have a preferred method of communication (telephone, e-mail or fax) please let the homecare agencies in your community know that is the best way to ensure a prompt response from you. Their goal is consistent, efficient communication that creates the least amount of interruption for you while assuring your patient's needs are met in a timely manner.
- In non-acute situations, consider ordering an urgent homecare visit, rather than referring the patient to the ER to determine if home treatment is possible.

We value the care you provide to homecare patients and appreciate your consideration of working with homecare agencies on the proposed approaches to reducing acute care hospitalization. Physician support and assistance is key in helping Nebraska homecare agencies improve the rate of avoidable acute care hospitalization among Medicare patients.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact us for additional information.

Best regards,

{Insert Medical Director Name}
{Insert Title}
{Insert Homecare Agency Name}
{Insert Phone Number}

Audrey Paulman, MD, MMM
Principal Clinical Coordinator
CIMRO of Nebraska
1-800/458-4262