

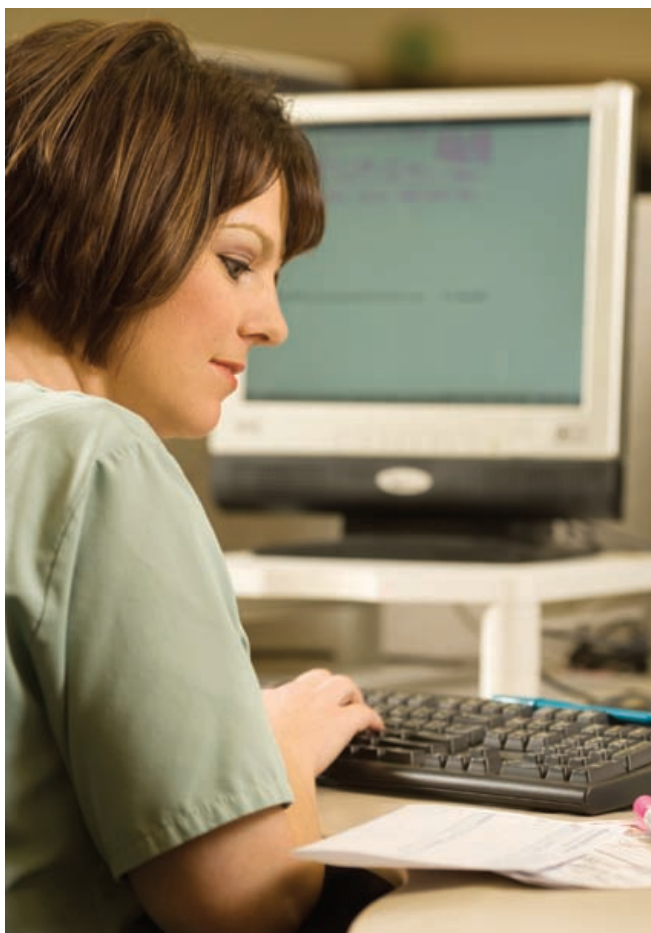
SUCCESS STORIES

More than just a survey tool

abaqis helped this quality-driven operator cut deficiencies. But its real benefit is more profound: harnessing performance improvement initiatives that fuel exemplary care

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Running a long-term care facility can be overwhelming and lonely. But there are heroes out there showing how success can be achieved. Each **SUCCESS STORIES** installment shows how a colleague turned a challenging situation into a victory.



For four decades, UHS-Pruitt Corporation has delivered peace of mind to its patients, residents, clients and their families.

Resident needs and preferences tend to be moving targets. This challenge makes it important for operators to have tools that can monitor care and resident satisfaction, pinpoint areas that need improvement and establish best practices across their organizations.

Providers with these abilities have a distinct advantage during Quality Indicator

Surveys. They can also react quickly when changes or other improvements are warranted. These competencies also translate to higher occupancy, greater customer satisfaction and exemplary caregiving practices.

A growing number of long-term care operators have found that a web-based QA tool called abaqis fulfills each of these key goals, and more.

UHS-Pruitt, with its approximately 80 skilled nursing facilities in Florida, Georgia, and North and South Carolina, is one such operator. The firm chose abaqis as part of a broad-based, organization-wide QA initiative, and began rolling out the solution in September 2009. As a Southeast regional leader in long-term care for more than 40 years, UHS-Pruitt credits its enduring success to an unwavering commitment to quality of care and service excellence. After exploring various QA tools, the company discovered that abaqis was aptly suited to the firm's core operational philosophy of delivering the best care possible to its residents.

"We have always been very quality focused," said Neil Pruitt, chairman and CEO of UHS-Pruitt Corp. "We wanted our centers to have a specialized QA tool, and abaqis was the right choice for us."

Marketed and distributed exclusively through Medline Industries, Inc., abaqis is the only quality assessment and reporting system tied directly to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' QIS evaluation system. abaqis uses the same rates and threshold comparisons used by surveyors, which helps take the guesswork out of the survey process and enables long-term care providers to proactively, promptly and continuously monitor and address resident and family concerns.

"Before coming to UHS-Pruitt, I was a state survey

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agency director. I was excited about using QIS and I was pleased to learn that I would be responsible for rolling out abaqis in [UHS-Pruitt communities],” said David Dunbar, UHS-Pruitt’s chief compliance officer.

Even though UHS-Pruitt had consistently logged a good survey record, it found that abaqis helped reduce citations by roughly two per facility.

Tracking trends

A positive survey experience is indeed valuable for any operator, but that’s just one of abaqis’ notable advantages. Beyond that—and perhaps even more importantly—it’s a data-driven QA tool that allows operators to tackle more far-reaching performance improvement initiatives that enhance quality care. That’s an essential ingredient for success with a quality-focused operator of any size, let alone one like UHS-Pruitt that serves approximately 20,000 patients and clients.

“We have a pretty extensive QA [process] and abaqis is one of the QA tools we have in place. abaqis gives us access to data that we can then run through our performance improvement procedures,” explained Pruitt.

A strategic, methodical and well-planned implementation helped UHS-Pruitt chart its course for success. Each facility received comprehensive training on the abaqis system and staff was given ample time to familiarize themselves with the tool, ask questions, rise above any challenges, and, fully explore abaqis’ many QA-focused capabilities.

“As we rolled it out to our different facilities, we had individuals who really embraced it and championed it. That helped make the implementation pro-



While abaqis helps reduce inspector citations, its ability to help operators improve the care they deliver to residents is even more notable, users claim.

“We wanted our centers to have a specialized QA tool, and abaqis was the right choice for us.”

Neil Pruitt, Chairman and CEO, UHS-Pruitt Corp.

cess a success,” said Dunbar.

But it’s UHS-Pruitt’s organization-wide decision to tap all of abaqis’ potential that has garnered the most impressive results. “We find that abaqis is most effective when administrators really drive ongoing use and rely on it 365 days a year. That’s when you really get to see the macro data and are able to spot trends and areas that may need improvement. Performance improvement needs to be an ongoing process,” said Pruitt.

It’s a point that certainly isn’t lost on Deborah Harwell, UHS-Pruitt’s area vice president for North Carolina, and the facilities she oversees. Currently,

abaqis is in full swing in nine of the 11 UHS-Pruitt communities in the state, and the remaining two facilities are poised to be up and running soon.

The facilities use abaqis daily to monitor resident satisfaction and changes. “abaqis isn’t just for surveys – although it is very effective [in that capacity]. We find that it’s especially helpful as a continuous quality improvement and customer service tool,” Harwell noted. The data obtained from abaqis is shared during performance improvement meetings, and the results are also shared with the facility’s medical director on a quarterly basis.

To further maximize QA

efforts, Harwell routinely selects four or five of a facility’s more challenging residents and then uses abaqis to capture any grievances or concerns that may impact their satisfaction.

‘Very helpful’

“This is very helpful because it allows us to monitor any issues or changes, and see if there are any trends developing – such as if the majority of problems are occurring on a certain shift, for example. The more data you have, the more effective it becomes because you’re better you’re able to address issues quickly and effectively,” reasoned Harwell, adding that she personally monitors data going into abaqis each week.

At the end of each quarter, the data is reviewed and compiled, and then shared amongst all 11 of UHS-Pruitt’s North Carolina facilities.

“We look at how many reviews were done and the challenges that were shared, and even how those challenges were resolved. This information sharing allows us to drive best practices across all our centers,” she said.

As one of UHS-Pruitt’s trainers for the abaqis system for North Carolina, Harwell saw firsthand how user-friendly and flexible the tool was – and how important it was for each facility to fully maximize the solution’s capabilities.

“It was really embraced by us and has become an important part of our overall quality improvement process. Our goal is to provide the very best quality of care and quality of life for our residents, and abaqis helps us do that,” she continued. “I’m a huge supporter of abaqis, and I keep reiterating to my administrators its value and benefits. The results have been phenomenal.” ■

“How do we improve
our resident and family-
centered quality of care
and prepare for QIS?”

We use abaqis.”

Sherri Dahle, RN, DNS

*Director of Nursing
Central Healthcare
LeCenter, MN*



The new Quality Indicator Survey (QIS) for nursing homes is more resident-centered, with more information obtained from direct questioning of residents and families. In fact, 60 percent of facilities have had more deficiencies in QIS than in the prior traditional survey, often in regulatory areas such as quality of life that were not as fully investigated in the traditional process.

abaqis® is the only quality assessment and reporting system for nursing homes that is tied directly to the QIS, and its quality assessment modules reproduce the same forms, analysis and thresholds used by State Agency surveyors. Rich reporting capabilities on 30 care areas guide you to what surveyors will be targeting in your facility.

That gives you a unique advantage in preparing for your survey – and in meeting your resident’s needs.

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