

Transcript of interview between Elizabeth Newman, McKnight's editor, and David Gifford, MD, senior VP of quality and regulatory affairs at the American Health Care Association.

Elizabeth Newman:

This is Elizabeth Newman with McKnight's Long-Term Care News here at the AHCA Convention in Las Vegas. I'm here with Dr. David Gifford, the senior VP of quality and regulatory affairs. Dr. Gifford, this is a new position - tell me a little bit about your goals.

David Gifford:

It's a really great opportunity to come here work at AHCA and with everyone else. It's been a lot of fun. It's an organization that has been committed to quality for many years. We've tried to really focus on three main areas: Reducing rehospitalizations improving staff stability and improving resident satisfaction. We know that those three things that it's going to be really important to make those change and that it will impact a number of the residents. That's what we're focusing on.

Newman: So tell me how you're going to measure the data you are collecting.

Gifford: We're working on incorporating those measures right now into Long-Term Care Trend Tracker. That is a great tool that's free to all the members. We encourage people to use it more. We also are really encouraging people to work with the quality awards program because the quality awards program really helps people address the foundations of quality to make sure they can reduce the re-hospitalizations, improve staff stability and improve resident satisfaction.

Newman: And tell me what providers can do right now to achieve some of these goals.

Gifford: Well, we would encourage people, providers who have not looked into the quality awards program to look into it. For providers who have started and gotten the bronze, to really consider the silver. We know it has been a little discouraging for some because it's taken many attempts, sometimes two, three and four attempts, to get to silver or gold. But that's because those bars are high bars and hard to get to. And so we really recognize, I think, the members who have gotten to silver and gold. Those, we have seen much better measures of quality, measures on reduced rehospitalizations. We've seen improvement in deficiencies, we've seen improvement in quality measures and we've seen improvement with occupancy. So that is probably the one area they can really work with us.