



Oklahoma Association of Health Care Providers



National Association of Health Care Assistants

Media Contacts:

Rebecca Moore, Executive Director  
405.524.8338

Web: <http://www.oahcp.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OAHCP>

Jeff Wellman, Chief Operating Officer  
417.623.2230

Web: <http://www.nahcacareforce.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NAHCA>

## FACILITIES ENGAGING IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT DELIVER HIGHER QUALITY CARE

**Oklahoma City**– Oklahoma long-term care providers participating in professional development show an overall improvement in all areas of care, according to an analysis of data released by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority.

The Oklahoma Association of Health Care Providers (OAHCP) and the National Association of Health Care Assistants (NAHCA) announced their review and analysis from the third quarter 2014 Focus on Excellence survey data.

Focus on Excellence is a program from the Oklahoma Health Care Authority that measures and ensures the integrity and overall wellness of consumers at long term care facilities. It was initially conceived and established, in its original legislative form, during the 2006 legislative session and was a part of the Medicaid Reform Act of 2006 (HB2842).

More importantly, the survey is conducted annually by an independent third party contractor hired by OHCA to review resident, family member and employee satisfaction in Oklahoma's long term care facilities. Facilities are measured on nine performance metrics with each metric assigned a differential point value, those values in turn equivate to star ratings made readily available to consumers online.

An analysis of the FOE results showed that facilities actively engaging in the performance metrics, via awareness, education, mentoring, had higher outcomes than those who did not. Furthermore, a review of NAHCA's internal data showed that facilities engaged in the metric areas of "Distance Learning" and "Peer Mentoring," utilizing NAHCA's educational and training offerings, showed an overall improvement in all areas.

During the report period NAHCA collaborated with 100 centers, 91 of which engaged in Distance Learning and Peer Mentoring. A total of nine centers engaged in strictly Peer Mentoring. The collaboration between the care center and NAHCA started with identifying a specific opportunity for improvement. The NAHCA Professional Development Coach then provided coaching sessions through GoToWebinars and phone conferences along with educational development using the NAHCA Virtual Campus of Care which is a distance learning platform.

Data showed that 1,306 Oklahoma caregivers took 21,239 courses which resulted in a total of 17,136 hours of learning. 76 centers participated in some portion of the Peer Mentoring education. There were 355 Peer Mentoring candidates who completed 1,773 courses.

In order to enhance the professionalism of caregivers on the front lines, an additional 19 hours of on-site support were delivered to sites needing more intensive support to promote active involvement in the Distance Learning and Peer Mentoring processes.

Based on a new internal data collection tool NAHCA was also able to say that their Certified Preceptors served as peer mentors for 240 new caregivers. However, they cautioned the data collection tool has not been in-place long enough to determine the longitudinal impact of their efforts. In August of 2015 NAHCA will be able to make a more thorough analysis because they will have a full year of Peer Mentoring data.

The findings seemed to echo what those in the long term care community were already well aware of. Kimberly D. Green, a regional expert and recognizable leader in the long term care community, as well as Chief Operating Officer at the Diakonos Group, based in northeast Oklahoma, echoed support for the intent of the study. “There is an absolute relationship between distance learning and peer mentoring and quality. Too often companies forget that continued learning and mentoring feed our staff and their passion for their career. Growth is imperative to continue moving forward and education is the key to growth.” Green went on to state, “Distance Learning allows us to keep our team members in our communities, become a part of their continuing education and assist in supporting them as they increase their knowledge base.”

Diana Sturdevant, Director of Nursing at Mitchell Manor Convalescent Home in McAlester detailed the importance of the program, “participation in FOE provides incentive for facilities to strive to improve the quality of life and quality of care of the residents they serve. It provides goals to work toward and has been instrumental in encouraging facilities to move toward a more resident-centered model of care”. Sturdevant went on to highlight the significance of the two metrics, and services offered by NAHCA, that were highlighted in the study, “Distance Learning provides staff with many additional educational opportunities than we could provide through in-services. The Peer Mentoring program has been helpful in retention and stability of staff and staff stability has been shown to have a positive impact on quality outcomes in nursing homes.”

OAHCP and NAHCA re-iterated their thanks to the original legislative authors and advocates who have supported the program and its funding. Both groups concurred that the higher quality outcomes are attributable to a variety of factors but that Focus on Excellence, and the funding attached to the program, have a substantial impact.

Jeff Wellman, NAHCA’s Chief Operating Officer, stated, “The findings of our analysis show that Oklahoma’s long term care facilities who actively participate in NAHCA and take advantage of the trainings and offerings we have, perform better than those who do not.”

Rebecca Moore, Executive Director of the OAHCP reinforced her support of the analysis and NAHCA saying OAHCP, “has supported NAHCA for several years, we have a lot of confidence in the training and mentoring programs NAHCA provides to our member facilities and Certified Nurse Aides. It is not surprising to me that these programs have a direct link to improving the quality of care and satisfaction for our residents.”

In a letter to the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, Wellman promised that NAHCA stood ready and willing to assist with the remaining seven metrics to the best of their ability. “Our intention is to be dynamic, supportive, and valuable to Oklahoma’s elder population by enhancing the caregivers that render their care.” Both the OAHCP and NAHCA plan on assisting participating centers with gathering data and measuring desired outcomes. Furthermore, as a part of their internal on-going performance improvement process they have begun to develop improvement plans with the intention of enhancing performance and participation across the board. Both associations are anticipating that center ratings will improve prior to the next yearly report.

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#### **About OAHCP**

The Oklahoma Association of Health Care Providers represents more than 20,000 residents and 20,000 employees, owners and administrators that work in Oklahoma’s long term care facilities. The mission of OAHCP is to assist its members in providing the highest quality care to Oklahoma’s frail and elderly who live in our facilities and to advocate for the enhancement of that care so that Oklahoma long term care residents may live in the comfort and dignity they so richly deserve. For more information please visit [www.oahcp.org](http://www.oahcp.org).

#### **About NAHCA**

The National Association of Health Care Assistants is a professional association of and for Certified Nursing Assistants. NAHCA was formed in 1995 as a means of enhancing the recognition for the noble work that CNAs do, with the goals of providing continued education in a rapidly evolving profession, to advocate for our members and to provide tools to motivate our members in times when

their work becomes challenging. The association currently serves more than 25,000 caregivers from 592 centers in 35 states. For more information please visit [www.nahcacareforce.org](http://www.nahcacareforce.org).