Quality Indicators Reference Group

Purpose
As part of the Living Longer Living Better aged care reform package announced on 20 April 2012, the Department of Health and Ageing is seeking to establish a Reference Group, under the auspices of the National Aged Care Alliance, to provide advice on the development of quality indicators for residential aged care facilities to be published on the My Aged Care website from 1 July 2014.

National quality indicators will give consumers, their families and carers greater access to information about the quality of aged care services and greater control about the type of aged care services they use. It will increase transparency about the quality of services and support consumers to be more involved in making decisions about their care and services.

Policy context
The current aged care system can be very difficult for consumers and their families and carers to navigate. Sources of available information can be broad, varied and difficult to understand, affecting informed decision making.

The Living Longer Living Better package aims to create a flexible and seamless system that provides older Australians with more choice, more control and easier access to a full range of services, where they want it and when they need it, through a more consumer-focused approach and the gradual removal of supply controls.

Central to achieving this will be providing aged care consumers, their families and carers with better information to evaluate the quality of aged care services and to assist in comparing and choosing care.

Ongoing transparent, meaningful and accessible public reporting of relevant information about care service quality will also support a shift in policy focus beyond compliance with accreditation standards, process-oriented quality assurance and complaints resolution toward continuous quality improvement.

The development and implementation of a national quality indicators suite has been considered and recommended in a number of reports to the Australian Government in the last decade\(^1\), and the National Aged Care Alliance has also recommended the development of a national suite of quality indicators across the residential and community aged care sectors.\(^2\)

---
\(^1\) Productivity Commission 2011 Caring for Older Australians; Department of Health and Ageing 2008 Evaluation of the impact of accreditation on the delivery of quality of care and quality of life to residents in Australian Government subsidised residential aged care homes - Final Report; Department of Health and Ageing 2006 Developing resident-centred quality indicators in residential aged care; Department of Health and
Development of quality indicators for residential aged care will consider established practice overseas and locally. In the United States, since 2002 the Nursing Home Compare website has publicly reported quality indicator data for the approximately 18,000 Medicare/Medicaid-subsidised facilities. In Australia, since 2006 a set of quality indicators covering five categories and 11 individual indicators has been collected and internally reported within the Victorian public sector residential aged care system, which covers approximately 200 facilities.

While these and other examples of operational or proposed residential aged care quality indicator systems already exist, a system appropriate for Australia at the national level will be developed.

**Proposed Terms of Reference**

The Quality Indicators Working Group, as a subgroup of the National Aged Care Alliance, will provide advice to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing through the Department of Health and Ageing on:

- the elements of, and approach to, the development of relevant and transparent quality indicators for residential aged care facilities that will be published on the My Aged Care website from 1 July 2014 to provide information to consumers, their families and carers to support their decision making;
- domains of quality indicators that would support greater transparency and decision making;
- the relationship between quality indicators and accreditation and other regulatory requirements that are part of the aged care quality assurance framework; and
- implementation arrangements for the adoption of quality indicators – including the impact for consumers, their families and carers, approved providers and other stakeholders – that minimise the administrative burden on providers while maximising the provision of transparent and meaningful data to consumers.

The Reference Group will meet monthly, or less frequently as required, until July 2014.

The Reference Group will consult with external people, including individuals with expertise in quality, and organisations (such as the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency) on an as needed basis and in agreement with the Department of Health and Ageing.

---

Ageing 2005 Report on the feasibility of developing a standards rating system for all Australian government aged care homes

7 National Aged Care Alliance, Aged Care Reform Series – Quality of Care
**Membership**

Membership of the Advisory Group is attached.

**Indicative Timeframe**

Phase 1 – quality indicators development – by 30 June 2013

- develop draft quality indicators methodology for validation; (February-March 2013)
- agree set of quality indicators and an implementation approach; (April-May 2013)
- present formal recommendations to Government of proposed quality indicators, including definitions, measurement methods and implementation plan. (June 2014)

Phase 2 – quality indicators implementation – by 30 June 2014

- develop and finalise user (consumer and provider) materials, tools and processes (July 2013-May 2014);
- participation in iterative user (consumer and provider) testing of quality indicators including IT/website elements. (February-June 2014)

Phase 3 – publish quality indicators on *My Aged Care* website – 1 July 2014

A review of the operation of the quality indicators for residential aged care will be conducted after 1 July 2016.