

## ISSUE BRIEF

### Require an International Standard Quality Assurance Program for the ISDH Survey Process

*Action for the Indiana General Assembly:* Require the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) to utilize an International Standards Organization (ISO) quality assurance program to ensure consistency and fairness of the nursing home survey process. This action will eliminate arbitrary and subjective interpretations of survey requirements.

Independent researchers studying nursing home survey results have determined that the most dependable predictor of the outcome of these surveys is the zip code in which ***the facility is located\****. This is contrary to the idea of enhancing quality through objective reviews of facility performance in relationship to stated requirements. In Indiana we have heard from many nursing facilities that often they can predict the outcome of a survey by the survey team that arrives at their facility. This would indicate that there is a lack of control in a supposedly repeatable process.

Many attempts have been made to address the subjectivity of the ISDH nursing home survey process. These attempts have failed and nursing facilities continue to feel that the process remains subjective and, at times, punitive. What has transpired is that the process has changed from a performance-based to a personality-based exercise. The Indiana Health Care Association (IHCA) feels strongly that this is the core issue that results in the variability of survey results across Indiana.

IHCA recommends that the only way to effectively remove the subjectivity from the nursing home survey process is to adopt, implement, and administer a recognized national standard quality assurance program for the nursing home survey process. This approach will eliminate arbitrary findings and create a continuous quality improvement environment that will lead to improved quality of care – the ultimate objective for both regulators and nursing facility providers. The ISO 9001:2000 certification is the standard recommended by IHCA.

The **International Standards Organization (ISO) 9001:2000** certification specifies requirements for a quality management system where an organization:

1. Needs to demonstrate its ability to *consistently provide a product that meets customer and applicable regulatory requirements*, and
2. Aims to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for *continual improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable regulatory requirements*.

#### **Adopting a National Standard Format is Positive for All Stakeholders because it:**

- *Removes variability* from the survey process
- *Reduces needed ISDH resources* through improved efficiency
- *Can be funded without taxpayer dollars* through the Civil Monetary Penalty Fund without any additional appropriations
- *Creates a platform* for continuous quality improvement