

THE AHCA/NCAL NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD PROGRAM

Inspiring Excellence Since 1996



WHAT IS THE AHCA/NCAL NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD PROGRAM?

The AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program, established in 1996, recognizes long term and post-acute care member centers across the nation that strive for improved quality care. Based on the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework, a nationally recognized method known for improving business performance, the Program sets high standards for quality and encourages centers to commit to excelling in quality performance. Member centers apply for three progressive levels of awards: *Bronze—Commitment to Quality*, *Silver—Achievement in Quality*, and *Gold—Excellence in Quality*. Each level has its own distinct rigors and requirements for quality and performance excellence.

Level 1: Bronze Award— Commitment to Quality

The goal of this award level is to provide applicants with the tools and resources they need to achieve performance improvement through the introduction of the Baldrige criteria.

Level 2: Silver Award Level— Achievement in Quality

At this level, applicants respond to a sub-set of the Baldrige criteria to continue to learn and develop effective approaches to drive continual improvement of performance and health care outcomes.

Level 3: Gold Award— Excellence in Quality

At this final level of the Program, applicants must apply the Baldrige criteria in its entirety to show superior performance in areas of the criteria including leadership, strategic planning, and customer and staff satisfaction.

All long term and post-acute care organizations that are members in good standing of AHCA/NCAL are eligible to participate. Only individual centers may apply. To receive the award, skilled nursing care centers and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICFs/IID) must also meet survey requirements that can be found in the application material on the Quality Award Program website at ahcancal.org/qualityaward.

WHY SHOULD MY ORGANIZATION APPLY?

Performance Improvement

Nearly 90 percent of 2017 applicant survey respondents identify performance improvement as a main reason in applying for a quality award. The demands of the National Quality Award Program criteria also prepare providers for regulatory demands such as CMS' Quality Assurance/Performance Improvement (QAPI) requirements and the Medicare and Medicaid Requirements of Participation (RoP).

Superior Outcomes

Recent National Quality Award Program AHCA/NCAL research shows that Silver and Gold recipients have superior performance in key quality outcome areas such as 30-day hospital readmissions, off-label use of antipsychotics, occupancy rate, and operating margin. AHCA/NCAL data also shows that the proportion of Silver and Gold recipients with an overall Five-Star rating is 20 percent higher than that of long term and post-acute care organizations nationwide.

Esteemed Recognition

AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award recipients are recognized on a national level. Receipt of an award is an opportunity to show residents, family members and the community at-large an organization's commitment to continuous quality improvement.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

1. The application and criteria will be available for review online beginning August 1. Between September and November, applicants are encouraged to submit an intent to apply, which offers a discounted application fee. Those who submit an intent to apply also receive weekly application tips and resources from program staff.
2. In December, the application portal opens for online submissions. After the deadline in Winter 2018, applications will be reviewed by trained Examiners who provide each applicant comprehensive feedback reports.
3. Award recipients will be announced in Summer 2018. Recipients receive a promotional packet for their own marketing purposes and will be recognized at the AHCA/ NCAL Annual Convention & Expo, which occurs each October.

PROGRAM TIMELINE*

AUGUST 1, 2017

2018 Applications and Deadlines are published

SEPTEMBER 2017

Intent to Apply opens

NOVEMBER 2017

Intent to Apply closes

DECEMBER 2017

2018 Applications are accepted online

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

Final application deadline

*This is an approximate timeline for the 2018 award program, and is subject to change.

