

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Quality Initiative: **PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO NURSING HOME QUALITY INITIATIVE**

Providers recently got a heads up on the federal quality nursing home quality initiative set for a national launch in October.

Leaders of provider associations, quality improvement organizations, consumer groups and government agencies met in Baltimore in late July to evaluate the pilot stage of the initiative—which began in April in six states (OH, MD, FL, WA, CO, RI).

The central message: cooperation among all parties will be critical for success of the initiative.

The two-day conference — titled "Partnerships for Success: The Federal Initiative on Quality Improvement and Public Reporting in Nursing Facilities" — was co-sponsored by the **American Health Care Association**, the **American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging** and **Rhode Island Quality Partners**.

Attendees heard how state-run quality improvement organizations or QIOs are playing a central role in the development of key state-level partnerships among providers, quality experts and regulators. Funding of QIO efforts has become an issue, however.

Surveys conducted by QIOs in more than a dozen states in recent months show far stronger demand for assistance from nursing homes than anticipated by architects of the federal initiative.

Praising attendees for the courage to tackle a difficult task through the initiative, CMS Administrator **Tom Scully** announced a \$35 million increase in funding for QIO training. CMS also has asked the **Office of Management and Budget** for \$65 million or so more in addition funding.

Editor's note: For an inside look at how facilities have fared under the quality initiative in pilot states and for details on the national rollout, see the September Long-Term Care Survey Alert.