

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

SPECIAL FOCUS: CASE STUDY--Check Out This Facility's Positive Experience With Paid Feeding Assistants

Improve quality of life, tap existing staff as feeding assistants.

What might you expect paid feeding assistants to do for your resident outcomes and quality of life?

Ingham County Medical Care Facility found that its paid feeding assistant program didn't translate into "big weight gains" for residents, says its administrator **Susan O'Shea**. That's because the facility in Okemos, MI, didn't have weight loss and hydration problems going into the state's pilot program for feeding assistants, which has now ended.

But having the paid feeding assistants on board did improve the environment, says O'Shea. For one, the program kept CNAs from "feeling so rushed in going from person to person to help them eat," O'Shea tells **Eli**. "We also had some residents in the program who were very slow eaters," she adds. "And the feeding assistants would heat up the [residents'] food in the microwave when it got cold. The feeding assistants also had time to really talk to the resident during the meals, which the residents enjoyed."

Ingham recruited its own "resident assistants" to train as paid feeding assistants for the pilot program. The facility hires resident assistants as a step before sending them to certified nursing assistant training at a local community college, explains O'Shea.

"We provide the resident assistants a mini-training that really mirrors the training they get to become a certified nursing assistant. The RAs pass water, hand out trays in the independent dining area, transport residents, etc., but do not provide hands-on care."