

NQF

THE NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM

October 21, 2004

Dear NQF Member:

This week, after months of planning, the National Quality Forum (NQF) formally announced establishment of the National Commission for Quality Long-term Care. The Commission is co-chaired by former Senator Bob Kerrey and former Speaker Newt Gingrich. (A full list of Commissioners is attached.)

The Commission's charge is to evaluate the quality of long-term care in the United States, identify factors influencing the ability to improve quality of care nationally, and make recommendations about national efforts that should lead to sustainable quality improvement. The Commission will direct its initial attention to nursing homes, but will examine each setting of care for those critical factors that influence quality.

The NQF, acting in its established role as a convener of a broad array of healthcare stakeholders, is staffing and supporting the Commission. I hope you will support this important effort, which we anticipate will lead to much needed quality improvement in long-term care settings. If you have any questions, please call Tammy McBride, RN, BSN, the NQF senior project director who is overseeing the Commission's day-to-day work, at 202.783.1300, or e-mail her at tmcbride@qualityforum.org.

Enclosures:

- Press release
- Brochure (electronic version)
- List of Commissioners
- Statement of Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary, HHS

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 12, 2004
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National Commission for Quality Long-term Care Formed to Improve Quality of American Long-term Care

Washington, DC- National Quality Forum President and CEO Kenneth W. Kizer today announced the convening of the National Commission for Quality Long-term Care. Co-chaired by former Senator Bob Kerrey and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the Commission is charged with evaluating the current quality of long-term care, identifying factors that influence the ability to improve quality of this care, and tracking improvement in the years ahead. In addition to the co-chairs, the Commission includes two sitting governors, representatives of patients and their families, healthcare providers, academics, and former local government officials.

The Commission is unique in a number of ways, especially in being launched by the National Quality Forum (NQF), a public-private partnership whose purpose is to improve the quality of American healthcare, and in being initially funded by several long-term care associations. The NQF was selected to administer the Commission because of its record of objectivity and independence, its previous work on national healthcare quality measures, and its open and transparent processes.

"The National Commission for Quality Long-term Care represents a bold vision for setting and achieving both broad goals and specific objectives for quality and financing of long-term care," said Kerrey, a former Governor and two-term Democratic Senator from Nebraska and current President of New School University, New York City. "It's a great challenge ahead of us, but this diverse and talented group is uniquely qualified to meet it."

"This Commission is committed to transforming the long-term care industry into one of healthy, active aging," said former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, founder of the DC-based Center for Health Transformation. "They will identify the solutions and policies that will encourage the aging baby boomers and their children to stay active and healthy for as long as possible, thus maximizing their quality of life, and the period in which they can live independently with the greatest prosperity. This is a remarkable public policy opportunity."

The Commission has five goals:

1. To recommend national goals and objectives for long-term care quality improvement;
2. To report on long-term care quality indicators and measures, in order to determine progress in achieving national improvement goals, to judge improvement efforts, and to assess stakeholders' commitment to improving;

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

3. To provide a forum for public dialogue among long-term care professionals, consumers, regulators, purchasers, providers, and other stakeholders on long-term care quality and quality improvement;
4. To review quality-related policy proposals, and facilitate accountability and public confidence in long-term care; and
5. To recommend a national policy agenda for long-term care quality improvement.

“This Commission will look at long-term care with fresh eyes and a sense of urgency,” Dr. Kizer said. “When you consider the demographic and financial pressures associated with this issue, it is clearly one of the top domestic policy issues confronting the nation.”

Other members of the Commission are:

- Hon. Mark R. Warner (D), Governor of Virginia
- Hon. Dirk Kempthorne (R), Governor of Idaho
- Former Senator David Durenberger (R-MN)
- Monsignor Charles J. Fahey, Fordham University, Bronx, NY
- Michael Millenson, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
- William D. Novelli, AARP, Washington, DC
- Richard Payne, MD, Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life, Duke University School of Divinity, Durham, NC
- Sister Mary Jean Ryan, SSM Health Care, St. Louis, MO
- Judith A. Salerno, MD, MS, National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD
- Sandra R. Smoley, RN, BSN, The Sandy Smoley Group, Fair Oaks, CA
- Jeanette C. Takamura, MSW, PhD, Columbia University School of Social Work, New York, NY
- Kenneth W. Kizer, MD, MPH, National Quality Forum, Washington, DC

The National Quality Forum, a private, not-for-profit, public benefit corporation created in 1999 to develop and implement a national strategy for healthcare quality measurement and reporting, is convening the Commission. The NQF will oversee the Commission and provide managerial staff and systems support, but the Commission will act as a functionally autonomous body.

Initial funding for the Commission is provided by the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care, the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, and the American Health Care Association. Additional information may be found at www.qualitylongtermcarecommission.org.

The mission of the NQF is to improve American healthcare through endorsement of consensus-based national standards for measurement and public reporting of healthcare performance data that provide meaningful information about whether care is safe, timely, beneficial, patient-centered, equitable and efficient. Established as a unique public-private partnership, the NQF has broad participation from all sectors of the healthcare industry. Visit the NQF on the web at www.qualityforum.org.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR QUALITY



LONG-TERM CARE

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
NATIONAL QUALITY FORUM



A Promise to Keep

One of the most difficult decisions a family undertakes is selecting a nursing home for a loved one. The process is often burdened with guilt, anger, and doubt. But it doesn't have to be that way. America's long-term care facilities and services are getting better—although much work remains to be done.

The long-term care field is borrowing quality enhancement tools from other industries to improve from within. The federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is publishing quality of care information on nearly 17,000 nursing homes nationwide on the Internet, at www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/home.asp. And, the National Quality Forum has recently endorsed national voluntary consensus standards to measure the quality of care delivered at nursing homes—giving consumers important new tools to help them select a facility or service. Together, these efforts comprise the largest and most comprehensive nationwide effort to improve America's nursing homes to date.

But the work is far from complete. The next step is the National Commission for Quality Long-term Care. Its charge: to evaluate the quality of long-term care, identify factors influencing the ability to improve quality of care nationally, and make recommendations about national efforts that should lead to sustainable quality improvement.



The National Commission for Quality Long-term Care

The Commission exists to improve America's long-term care nursing homes. As an autonomous body convened by the National Quality Forum, it relies on advice from experts, but acts independently of any individual, group, or industry.

The Commission has five goals:

1. To recommend national goals and specific objectives and targets for long-term care quality improvement;
2. To report on long-term care quality indicators and measures, in order to determine progress in achieving national improvement goals, to judge improvement efforts, and to assess stakeholders' commitment to improving;
3. To provide a forum for public dialogue among long-term care professionals, consumers, regulators, purchasers, providers, and other stakeholders on long-term care quality and quality improvement;



4. To review quality-related policy proposals and facilitate accountability and public confidence in long-term care; and
5. To recommend a national policy agenda for long-term care quality improvement.

The Commission is composed of volunteer members who reflect a diversity of experience, expertise, and interests—representing consumers, purchasers, providers and researchers. It will hold open meetings at least twice a year and may appoint consultants, technical advisors, or technical advisory committees. It will report on its findings at least once a year.

About the Commission

The National Quality Forum (NQF), a private, not-for-profit health-care quality improvement organization, appointed members to the National Commission for Quality Long-term Care after consulting with leaders and advocates from the long-term care community. The NQF, acting in its role as a convener of a broad array of healthcare stakeholders, will staff and support the Commission but play a neutral role in its activities, findings, and recommendations.

For more information about the National Commission for Quality Long-term Care, visit www.qualitylongtermcarecommission.org or call 202.783.1300.



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

Former Senator Bob Kerrey, Co-Chair

President, New School University, New York, NY

Former Speaker Newt Gingrich, Co-Chair

Founder, The Center for Health Care Transformation, Washington, DC

The Honorable Mark R. Warner

Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne

Governor of Idaho

Former Senator David F. Durenberger

Chair, National Institute of Health Policy, Minneapolis, MN

Reverend Monsignor Charles J. Fahey

Doty Professor Emeritus, Fordham University, Bronx, NY

Michael L. Millenson

Mervin Shalowitz, MD Visiting Scholar, Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL

William D. Novelli

Chief Executive Officer, AARP, Washington, DC

Richard Payne, MD

Esther Colliflower Professor and Director, Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, NC

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Dean, Columbia University School of Social Work, New York, NY

Kenneth W. Kizer, MD, MPH

National Quality Forum, Washington, DC



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2004

HHS Press Office
(202) 690-6343

Statement by Tommy G. Thompson Secretary of Health and Human Services On the Formation of the National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care

HHS applauds the creation of the National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care and commends its members for their service in an important effort -- improving the quality of long-term care in America. The National Quality Forum (NQF) under the direction of Ken Kizer is also to be commended for its leadership in helping to form the commission. With the first of the Baby Boomer generation quickly approaching retirement age, it is critical that we address the challenges presented by the need to enhance the quality of long-term care.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has worked closely with NQF over the last three years in its ongoing initiatives to improve quality in nursing homes, home health agencies and hospitals. We look forward to the work of the National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care and offer our help as it pursues its agenda.

Over the last two years, HHS has launched a series of quality improvement initiatives focusing on the nursing home, home health care and hospital sectors. The initiatives are designed to improve the quality of care received by recipients through the public reporting of common indicators that can be used to judge the quality of the facility and the care provided. NQF has been a partner in all three initiatives.

In June, HHS and its partner, the National Governors Association, announced plans for a five state Long-Term Care Awareness Campaign, "Own Your Future," aimed at increasing public awareness of long-term care options and the importance of making long-term care plans.

At HHS, we remain committed to developing the initiatives and innovations that will provide quality long-term care that best meets the needs of our families. And we appreciate the private-sector partnership in this endeavor.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

Last Revised: October 14, 2004