



Customers Satisfied With Quality

A survey of customers at 2,224 U.S. nursing facilities found high levels of customer satisfaction in quality of life, care, and service.

WITH THE ABILITY TO look at performance across interdependent systems—such as leadership, organizational culture, clinical processes, human resources, management practices, environmental design, operations, and information systems—long term care providers can focus their resources on organizational processes that ultimately drive quality. This is the message that My InnerView, a Wasau, Wis.-based independent long term care research firm, wants to convey to the profession.

“When you ask a family member or a resident what matters most to them, they don’t mention survey deficiencies,” says My InnerView President Neil Gulsvig. “State surveys tell you something about quality, but they don’t paint the whole picture. We need to ask ourselves some tough questions: What is it that residents, families, and employees really want? How can we meet their changing expectations?”

First-Of-Its-Kind Survey

To drive this message home, My InnerView recently released the results of a first-of-its-kind nursing facility customer satisfaction survey, which was based on responses from 2,224 facilities across the United States. The

Nearly 80 Percent Rated Quality Of Life As Excellent Or Good (Ratings Based On Nine Criteria)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Dignity	43.0%	44.9%	9.7%	2.4%
2. Safety	39.3%	48.6%	9.5%	2.6%
3. Social relationships	31.8%	51.9%	13.1%	3.2%
4. Privacy	29.6%	53.5%	13.6%	3.3%
5. Meaningful activities	29.3%	48.2%	16.8%	5.6%
6. Spirituality	28.6%	51.7%	15.1%	4.7%
7. Autonomy	24.0%	56.6%	16.2%	3.1%
8. Security of personal belongings	19.1%	43.6%	25.0%	12.3%
9. Dining experience	17.1%	51.7%	24.4%	6.8%
Overall average	29.1%	50.1%	15.9%	4.9%

More Than 77 Percent Rated Quality Of Care As Excellent Or Good (Based on Eight Criteria)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Nursing care	40.7%	45.7%	11.1%	2.5%
2. Family communication	39.2%	41.2%	13.9%	5.6%
3. Caring staff	35.8%	46.9%	14.0%	3.4%
4. Nurse assistant care	33.7%	44.6%	17.1%	4.6%
5. Staff competency	31.9%	50.6%	14.5%	2.9%
6. Rehab therapy	30.5%	47.2%	15.8%	6.5%
7. Grooming	22.5%	48.8%	21.8%	6.8%
8. Staffing adequacy	18.3%	43.0%	26.6%	12.1%
Overall average	31.6%	46.0%	16.9%	5.6%

More Than 72 Percent Rated Quality Of Service As Excellent Or Good (Based On Four Criteria)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Cleanliness	32.5%	45.6%	17.0%	4.8%
2. Mgmt. responsiveness	28.9%	45.7%	18.2%	7.1%
3. Quality of meals	20.3%	47.7%	23.5%	8.6%
4. Laundry	19.9%	48.9%	22.3%	8.9%
Overall average	25.4%	47.0%	20.3%	7.4%

*Source: My InnerView 2005 National Survey of Resident and Family Satisfaction in Nursing Facilities
Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding*

results reveal some surprising findings and yield “by far the largest and most comprehensive database on resident

and family satisfaction ever assembled,” according to the firm’s June 2006 report on the research. Conducted in 2005, the survey asked residents and family members to judge the overall satisfaction with the facility and how they would recommend the facility to others. In response, nearly 83 percent rated their overall satisfaction as “excellent” or “good” while 82 percent judged their willingness to recommend the facility to others also as “excellent” or “good.”

“Never before has there been a national database to benchmark customer satisfaction in nursing facilities throughout the country,” says Gulsvig, who has worked in long term care since 1975. “Until now, most of the data has been anecdotal or so small in size that it cannot be projected nationally.”

Measuring Quality

In addition to measuring global satisfaction, the survey assessed three domains: quality of life, quality of care, and quality of service. Among its major findings, the survey revealed that quality of life, measured by social relationships with staff and other residents, autonomy, dignity, privacy, meaningful activities, spirituality, and resident safety, was given an “excellent” or “good” rating by a total of nearly 80 percent of residents and families.

Quality of care, measured by adequacy, competency, and attitudes of staff; care provided by nurses, aides, and therapists; how the resident is groomed; and how staff communicate with families to keep them informed about residents' status, was rated by more than 77 percent of residents and

families as "excellent" or "good." The third domain, quality of service, assessed quality of meals, laundry services, cleanliness of the premises, and management responsiveness. Seventy-two percent of residents and families rated this domain as "excellent" or "good."

Breaking down the domains by each measure offers more specific data about resident and family satisfaction. For example, dignity, one measure of quality of life, garnered 43 percent "excellent" responses and 44.9 percent "good." The quality of care measures received similar ratings, with more than 50 percent (50.6) of the staff competency and attitudes rated as "good" and another 31.9 percent giving it an "excellent." Within the quality of service domain, cleanliness ranked high among the respondents, with nearly 80 percent rating it as "good" or "excellent."

■ When you ask residents what matters most to them, they don't mention survey deficiencies.

Room For Improvement

In its analysis of the data, My InnerView researchers also identified areas in need of greatest improvement. "Customer ratings of global satisfaction and quality of life are overwhelmingly positive," they wrote. "However, this is not to say there is no room for improvement."

The researchers pointed to dining experience, security of personal belongings, and autonomy—the lowest-rated areas within the quality-of-life domain—as "improvement opportunities," while nursing care, family communication, and caring staff were identified within the quality-of-care domain as areas in need of improvement. As for quality of service, the quality of meals and laundry were given the lowest ratings.

With important implications for public policy, research, and practice,

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the national survey establishes a baseline assessment from which to benchmark performance on key metrics, according to the My InnerView report.

To that end, the American Health Care Association (AHCA) will utilize the data to achieve Quality First goals and develop quality improvement tools

for its members. "This survey demonstrates the profession's commitment to advancing the Quality First initiative," says Chris Condeelis, AHCA's senior director of quality and professional development. "At the national level we see the survey results as a guide in developing quality improvement prod-

ucts for facilities and serving as evidence-based facts to help us dispel misconceptions on the part of some policy makers and the public.

"The bottom line for the baseline, however, happens at the facility level, where leaders must focus on solving problems. The only way to accomplish this is by including the voice of the customer and staff in the quality improvement process."

The majority of survey respondents were adult children of residents. Among those family members who responded, including spouses, brothers or sisters, friends, grandchildren, and others, the adult children reported visiting the resident most often—at least weekly.

Among the more than 70,000 respondents, 89 percent were families of residents and 11 percent were residents. The majority of residents were over the age of 80, female, and had lived in the nursing facility for at least one year.

Going Forward

This year, My InnerView will conduct satisfaction surveys in more than 4,000 nursing facilities throughout the United States. The firm plans to repeat the survey annually and provide the results back to the profession. "This is something that people can look forward to seeing each year," says Gulsvig. "As the demographics of this country continue to change, these data will become even more important."

The company will continue to analyze the data and report on its research. "Now starts the drill downs into the relationships among the data points," says Gulsvig.

Gulsvig, who founded My InnerView with his wife Janice in 2002, explained that this is their way of giving something back to the profession so every nursing facility can utilize this data in their quality improvement journey. ■