



# Nursing Home Services

## Case Study

Masspro is one of the leading performance improvement organizations in the United States, dedicated to advancing healthcare quality. Founded by the Massachusetts Medical Society, which publishes the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Masspro transforms healthcare through developing and disseminating innovative solutions across all sectors of the healthcare delivery system.

Masspro's performance improvement expertise combined with our unique ability to work across the full continuum of patients, providers, purchasers, and payers, enables us to help transform the care delivery system as a whole, not just its individual components.

### Abbott House Efforts Lead to Drop in Restraint Use

#### *Side-rail use down 74 percent in six months*

When Laurie Heiner, RN, BSN, came to Abbott House as the Director of Nursing, she initiated weekly interdisciplinary team meetings to determine the issues impacting staff and residents. The issue that caught her attention was the use of full-length side-rails (which can be considered a restraint mechanism) with 15 of the facility's residents. "The increasing reports of side-rail related injuries in nursing homes compelled us to seek alternative interventions to prevent bed-related falls," Heiner said.

Initially, facility staff and residents' family members were apprehensive at the thought of reducing side-rail use because they feared that residents would fall out of bed without them. However, the use of full-length side-rails brought with it inherent dangers like entrapment and injuries such as fractures, cuts, and abrasions.

In March 2006, staff began to educate family members on the risks associated with side-rails and the need to reduce their use. Many family members had been unaware of the dangers and permitted staff to remove them. Staff continued to gain confidence in the effort to reduce side-rails after they saw that residents were not falling, and that they were happier because they weren't confined.

Simultaneously, nurses were educated not to order side-rails upon admission, unless patients had special circumstances (e.g., history of seizures). Instead, they were informed of safer options, including performing frequent checks on residents, conducting walking rounds on each floor, and placing call bells within residents' reach.

After a six-month period, side-rails were only used with four patients out of the original 15, a reduction of 74 percent. These patients had a history of seizures, and the side-rails were needed to hold seizure padding in place.

Since the intervention was implemented, none of the residents whose bed rails were removed have fallen. In addition, nurses have not ordered any side-rails upon admission for new residents. If the new residents are admitted with a fracture due to a fall or have a history of falls, the staff monitors them closely for the first 24 hours by checking them frequently and then determines if they would benefit from an alternative safety measure such as an alarm.

Abbott House has received praise for its efforts from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, the federal government, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Meanwhile, Heiner recognizes Masspro as a partner in the effort, "Masspro's learning sessions have helped tremendously in getting us back on track."

#### *About Abbott House*

Abbott House is located in Lynn, MA, and has served the Greater Lynn community since 1963. The 55-bed facility is operated by BaneCare and offers skilled nursing services, long-term care, short-term rehabilitation, and private-duty nursing through its Swampscott Wing program.

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### Share your success!

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Do you have a success story to share? Please let us know by contacting Helen Magliozzi, BSN, RN, Manager, Home Health and Long-Term Services, at 781.419.2797 or [hmagliozzi@maqio.sdps.org](mailto:hmagliozzi@maqio.sdps.org).

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