



# CARE COORDINATION

## Applewood Rehabilitation Center - Winchester, NH

In recognition of efforts to reduce preventable hospital admissions and readmissions.



### Readmission and ED Utilization Reduction

#### BACKGROUND

Applewood Rehabilitation Center is a 72-bed skilled nursing facility (SNF) located in Winchester, New Hampshire. It is owned by Genesis, a leading provider of short- and long-term care across 22 states. Within its homelike setting, Applewood provides a wide range of services including post-acute care, rehabilitation services, and specialty medical services while engaging residents in a variety of recreational programs. Applewood offers short-term rehabilitation, long-term care, or short-stay respite care.

Applewood sought to increase clinical efficiencies by addressing resident concerns within the facility whenever possible, rather than transferring them to the hospital for evaluation and treatment. With the philosophy is that the SNF is the residents' home, Applewood embarked on this project in order to help residents remain in the facility as much as possible.

The overarching goal was to reduce re-admissions and reduce emergency department utilization in order to improve the quality of life for residents, align with CMS objectives, and improve the quality metrics of the facility.



#### APPROACH

Applewood demonstrated its commitment to quality improvement by participating in IPRO QIN-QIO learning events and coalition activities. For example, staff attended a virtual education session on Antipsychotic Reduction. After attending an IPRO QIN-QIO in-person session presented by Healthcentric Advisors at the New Hampshire Healthcare Association in June 2023, Applewood obtained its SAR/Care Transition Report and requested individual support from the IPRO QIN-QIO team on using the reports to inform and guide quality improvement.

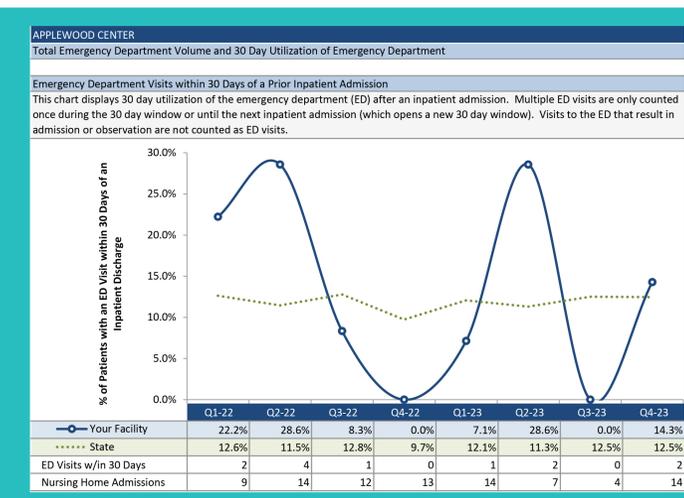
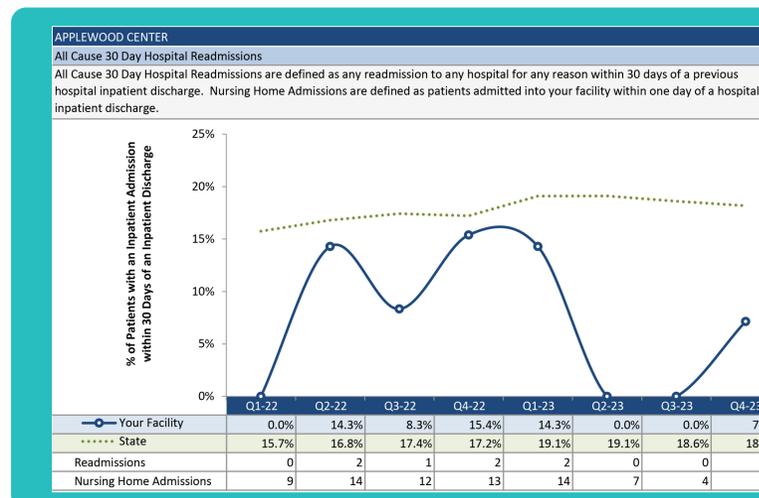
The quality improvement (QI) approach focused on enhancing the facility's clinical staff through recruitment and training. An IV Specialist was brought in to provide IV certification for Applewood's nursing staff. Additional registered nurses with experience in tracheotomy care were hired. By focusing on clinical competencies, Applewood increased its capacity to assess and manage residents in place, which reduced the need to transfer patients to the hospital for care.

Applewood's Quality Assurance/Performance Improvement Committee began reviewing unplanned discharges as a quality topic. The Director of Nursing now reviews details of all hospital transfers and analyzes trends and outcomes in order to help the team focus on preventable transfers.

#### RESULTS

Since implementing these interventions, the facility has passed three core measures, including two that many facilities have struggled to meet.

- Healthcare-Acquired Infections (HAI):
  - Long-stay baseline: .02; Current: 0.1, achieving a 63% relative improvement rate (RIR).
  - Short-stay baseline: 3.33%; Current: 2.44%, achieving a 27% RIR.
- Nursing Home ED Visits:
  - Long-stay baseline: 0%; Current: 0% and the facility maintains this level.
  - Short-stay baseline: 2.01; Current 0%.
- COVID-19 Staff Vaccination:
  - Baseline 2.97%; Current 10.10% (Source: Data Validation and Analysis Contractor).
  - Up to 30% of later periods, and now 12% and continuing to increase (Source: NSHN).
- All-Cause 30-day Readmission Rate: Current: 9.5% (four-quarter average). This is consistently below state average (18.17).



#### CONCLUSIONS

Next steps for the facility include performing a post-evaluation on all discharged residents to understand whether strategies to retain the resident at the facility might have been used. Analyzing all clinical data, including tracking residents who experience a change in condition, all transfers to the hospital, and performing a root cause analysis on those who are transferred, contributes to Applewood's continuous quality improvement cycle.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The partnership between Kate Carson, NP, and Haris Bilal, MD, with the facility has made it possible to keep residents at Applewood and avoid unnecessary transfers to the hospital. Both are ER providers who understand that ER care is often inappropriate for SNF residents. They have confidence in the Applewood clinical team and support the nursing staff to provide clinical care within the facility.



Haris Bilal, MD