The National CLAS Standards in Long-Term Care Settings

Tips for Engagement, Continuous Improvement, & Accountability

Long-term care (LTC) facilities should strive to provide high quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) for all residents. By focusing on community engagement, continuous improvement, and accountability, LTC facilities can build an organizational culture that is inclusive, welcoming, and affirming for all. Informed by research and recommendations from stakeholder organizations, this Tip Sheet describes practical ways that LTC facilities can promote the National CLAS Standards. The tips below align with the National CLAS Standards for Health and Health Care.

While the National CLAS Standards are not themselves legal requirements, they support many aspects of CMS' mission, are a critical part of the CMS Framework for Health Equity, and provide a blueprint for health care organizations to provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services.*

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*The National CLAS standards are not themselves legal requirements. However, health care organizations are also subject to numerous legal requirements, not discussed herein, that may overlap with lessons or recommendations related to the National CLAS standards in some cases. For example, health care entities may be subject to Section 1557, the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title VI, as well as their implementing regulations. This document is not intended to provide guidance on complying with these legal requirements.

Theme 3
Engagement, Continuous Improvement, & Accountability: Standards

Standard 10: Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization's CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.

Standard 11: Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS on health equity and outcomes and to inform service delivery.

Standard 12: Conduct regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area.

Standard 13: Partner with the community to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and services to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness.

Standard 14: Create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints.

Standard 15: Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining CLAS to all stakeholders, constituents, and the general public.

TIP 1

ESTABLISH A PLAN TO CREATE ORGANIZATION-WIDE SUPPORT FOR AND UNDERSTANDING OF CLAS

Creating a plan that prioritizes CLAS at all levels can help organizations achieve increased staff engagement and accountability. LTC facilities can:

- **Create** organization-wide goals for CLAS and review and update policies and procedures as needed

- **Understand** staff attitudes and competence around CLAS to identify training needs and/or needs for staff sensitivity discussions

- **Establish** patient advisory councils or advisory committees to discuss staff and LTC resident cultural needs, concerns, and challenges and to identify solutions

- **Engage** residents, family members, and others who can provide insight on CLAS implementation

TIP 2

ENGAGE AND COLLABORATE WITH COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS

Local, state, and national organizations can support elements of CLAS implementation in LTC settings. To draw upon these resources, LTC facilities can:

- **Partner** with national organizations, like SAGECare or the National Center for Assisted Living, which can provide CLAS-related trainings and support

- **Collaborate** with local cultural groups, resource centers, local non-profits, associations, and community coalitions focused on culture and/or diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility initiatives to support CLAS efforts

TIP 3

COLLECT RELIABLE DATA TO INFORM CLAS DELIVERY

Efforts to regularly monitor and obtain feedback are critical for continuous quality improvement. To ensure continuous quality improvement, LTC facilities can:

- **Regularly** review and update resident information gathering tools to ensure collection of demographics, cultural background, sexual orientation and gender identity, and language preferences data

- **Create** a process for obtaining feedback and input from staff and residents on how to implement the National CLAS Standards

  - Take account of residents' lived experience when asking for feedback on a newly developed policy, or during routine process evaluation.

- **Review** existing conflict and grievance procedures to ensure that they are easily accessible and reflective of the cultural and linguistic differences of LTC residents

  - Train management and staff to field and respond to grievances and complaints with a CLAS lens.

REFERENCES

1   Adane K, Gizachew M, Kendie S. The role of medical data in efficient patient care delivery: a review. Risk Manag Healthc Policy. 2019;12:67-73. doi:10.2147/RMHP.S179259.

2   Hernandez LM, Blazer DG. The Impact of Social and Cultural Environment on Health. In: Genes, Behavior, and the Social Environment: Moving Beyond the Nature/Nurture Debate. National Academies Press (US); 2006. Accessed June 12, 2024. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19924/.

3   Kutschar P, Osterbrink J, Weichbold M. Interviewer effects in a survey examining pain intensity and pain interference in nursing home residents. Age Ageing. 2022;51(2):afac008. doi:10.1093/ageing/afac008.

4   Complaint and Grievance Resolution (guideline). AIDS Education and Training Center. Accessed June 12, 2024. https://www.aetcnmc.org/curricula/CLAS/mod4_7.html.

5   Information for the Public (recommendation). AIDS Education and Training Center. Accessed June 12, 2024. https://www.aetcnmc.org/curricula/CLAS/mod4_8.html.

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

For further exploration of the themes discussed in this Tip Sheet, refer to the resources below.

Inventory of Resources for Standardized Demographic and Language Data Collection

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

A compendium of resources and tools for collecting patient demographic and language data.

Engaging Community Partners to Support Equitable Crisis Response and Recovery

Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health

A guidance document that provides an overview of how health care facilities can create mutually beneficial partnerships by leveraging their strengths.

Quality Safety & Oversight – Guidance to Laws & Regulations: Nursing Homes

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

A webpage featuring CMS Federal requirements for nursing home policies surrounding quality, safety, and oversight.

Providing Care to a Diverse Older Adult Population

National Institute on Aging

A webpage that includes guidance and resources for providing culturally sensitive care and language assistance to a diverse older adult population.