



**Great Plains Quality Care Coalition**  
**Nursing Home E-News: Nuts & Bolts**  
**Better Together**  
 November 2021 | Issue 22

**Great Plains Quality Care Coalition Webinar: Cross Cutting Strategies to Improve Infection Prevention & Control | November 16, 2021 | 3:00 pm CT**

Attend this Webinar to explore cross-cutting strategies to improve infection prevention and control. Presenters, Dee Kaser and Tammy Wagner, Great Plains QIN Quality Improvement Advisors, will explain how to use the **performance tracking tool in your auditing/surveillance program and how to improve and/or implement competency and observation activities** in your organization. Also, to be highlighted are resources, tools, and events on the Great Plains QIN Web site. [Register Today!](#)

**Education and Resources**

[Visit our GPQIN Event Calendar](#) for upcoming and past events

[Diabetes Lunch & Learn Series](#)

**November 8, November 15, November 22 | Noon CT**  
*Hosted by Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD)*

[Cross Cutting Strategies to Improve Infection Prevention & Control Webinar | Registration and Details](#)

**Tuesday, November 16 3:00 - 4:00 pm CT**  
 Speakers: Dee Kaser and Tammy Wagner  
*Offered by Great Plains QIN*

[Great Plains QIN Nursing Home Quality Webpage](#)



**Medical Director Engagement**

*Victoria Walker, MD, CMD*  
*Medical & Clinical Officer; Avel eCare*

Your medical director can be a fantastic resource. The first step is to make sure your medical director is “in the loop” – they can’t help if they are oblivious to your challenges. Start out by scheduling regular meetings between the administrator, medical director and director of nursing. Here are some ideas of what to talk about and types of actions that may result.

**Things to Talk About**

Quality	Staff	Regulatory
Facility performance overall on quality measures – how does the facility compare to others in the state?	Hiring / Turnover	Results of most recent survey
What PIP are you working on? How is it going?	Morale	How is the preparation for the next survey?
What are the average number of medications being taken by residents in the facility?	Performance on audits of key processes - i.e., hand hygiene	Any policy changes?
Residents who have been transferred to	Reinforce appropriate recognition and response to changes in condition	Are providers keeping up on their regulatory visits and responding to the consultant pharmacists?
	Any gaps in staff knowledge and skills	Are there any concerns about provider response time or the quality of care being provided?

[CMS Nursing Home Resource Center](#)

[CMS Toolkit on State Actions to Mitigate COVID-19 Prevalence in Nursing Homes](#)

[The National Partnership – Dementia Care Resources](#)

[CMS Targeted COVID-19 Training for Frontline Nursing Staff and Management](#): Scenario-based trainings available on-demand online

**CMS Five Star Rating | Quality Measure Quick Resource Links**

[Five Star Quality Rating | CMS](#)

[Care Compare | CMS](#)

[Quality Measures | CMS](#)

[SNF QRP | CMS](#)

[SNF VBP | CMS](#)

[MDS 3.0 RAI Manual | CMS](#)



### Examples of Next Steps after Conversation

## What do Antibiotics, Immunizations and Sepsis Have in Common? Why is it Important to “Connect the Dots”?

**Antibiotics** - According to the World Health Organization, antimicrobial resistance is one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity. <sup>1</sup> Every year, 2.8 million people get an antibiotic-resistant infection and more than 35,000 people die. <sup>2</sup> Although healthcare professionals have been working to combat this issue through antibiotic stewardship efforts, the CDC estimates approximately 47 million antibiotics are prescribed

for infections that don't require antibiotics, such as colds and the flu.<sup>3</sup> For there to be success in reducing antimicrobial resistance, a community approach is needed.

**Immunizations** - According to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 50,000 adults died annually<sup>4</sup> in the United States from vaccine-preventable infections. During the COVID-19 pandemic, routine vaccinations in adults have significantly decreased as much as 95% for some routine vaccines.<sup>5</sup>

**Sepsis** - According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 87% of patients with sepsis had symptoms prior to hospitalization and one in three patients who die in a hospital has sepsis.<sup>6</sup> Anyone can get an infection that leads to sepsis. Sepsis is a community issue that will take collaboration between all care settings - hospital, nursing homes, home health, physician clinics – to stop this life-threatening condition. Life-saving sepsis care requires antibiotics to treat the infection.

### **So, what do antibiotics, immunizations and sepsis have in common and why is it important to “Connect the Dots”?**

The answer is that by **PROTECTING** one's health, **PRESERVING** antibiotic effectiveness and **PREVENTING** infections leading to sepsis through immunizations, health hygiene and responsible antibiotic use you can improve health outcomes of those you care for in your nursing home and increase the knowledge of your community by *Connecting the Dots*.

Great Plains QIN developed the [Connecting the Dots](#) tools and resources to increase knowledge of the individual's role in their healthcare journey and to achieve better health outcomes through understanding the connection between sepsis, immunizations and antibiotics. The Connecting the Dots tools and resources include a handout on each topic, posters and bookmarks that can be printed and distributed.



#### **Sources:**

1. [World Health Organizations Fact Sheets \(October 12, 2020\)](#)
2. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Drug Resistance \(July 20, 2020\)](#)
3. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Antibiotic Resistance \(July 20, 2020\)](#)
4. [National Foundation for Infectious Diseases \(NFID\): Support Vaccination – Let Us Count the Ways \(August 2021 by NFID in National Immunization Awareness Month\)](#)
5. [National Foundation for Infectious Diseases \(NFID\); Issue Brief – The Impact of COVID-19 on US Vaccination Rates \(Published August 2020\)](#)
6. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Get Ahead of Sepsis; \(August 20, 2021\)](#)

### **NEW! Great Plains QIN Nursing Home Vaccination Change Package**

Check out the Great Plains Quality Innovation Network [Nursing Home Vaccination Change Package](#). It was developed to guide nursing homes in improving vaccination rates among residents and staff. The change package identifies barriers and challenges to vaccination and provides interventions supported by evidence-based tools and resources to improve influenza, pneumonia and COVID-19 vaccination and associated quality measures and rates.



*“There is so much misinformation out there, staff are having a difficult time understanding what to believe. Building trust is key within organizations. The Great Plains QIN Vaccination Change Package can guide nursing homes to resources and tools to build trust in vaccine safety, remove barriers to accessing vaccines and assist with communication strategies with staff, residents and families,”* shared Tammy Wagner, RN, CADDCT, CDP, LSSGB, Great Plains QIN Quality Improvement Advisor.



*“Achieving and sustaining 100% of residents who are assessed and appropriately given the influenza and pneumococcal vaccination quality measure is attainable and low hanging fruit for every nursing home. I have found that many don’t realize that the quality measures’ assessment piece takes into account residents who received the vaccination outside of the facility, declined vaccination, or have a medical contraindication. The Great Plains QIN Nursing Home Vaccination Change Package provides interventions, tools and resources to enhance understanding of the quality measure components and processes to meet the requirements with every MDS assessment,”* stated Krystal Hays, DNP, RN, CADDCT, CDP, RAC-CT, Great Plains QIN Regional Project Manager.

Great Plains QIN works to help increase COVID-19, influenza and pneumococcal vaccination rates in North Dakota and South Dakota as part of a national, cohesive effort funded by CMS. We believe if we work together to coordinate messages, share resources, and offer joint learning opportunities, we can collectively combat vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccine confidence in our nursing homes and the community at large. We value our partnership and want to work together to reduce duplication and decrease provider burden. If your organization is currently planning trainings or have projects underway that we could support or promote, please let us know. **Visit the Great Plains QIN [Vaccination Page](#) Web site to learn more.**

## **Flu and COVID-19 Vaccinations – Yes, You CAN Administer Them on The Same Day**

Flu season typically peaks between December and February because of the colder weather and change in human behavior. Health experts are urging everyone to get a flu vaccine this year. Due to low influenza levels last year, the CDC states that all available flu vaccines in the United States this flu season are quadrivalent (four-component) flu vaccines that are designed to protect against the four flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to spread and cause illness among people during the upcoming flu season. [CDC Frequently Asked Influenza \(Flu\) Questions: 2021-2022 Season](#)

[CDC Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Approved or Authorized in the United States](#) provides guidance on coadministration of COVID-19 vaccines with other vaccines including influenza vaccines may be administered without regard to timing of other vaccines. This includes simultaneous administration of COVID-19 vaccine and Influenza vaccine on the same day. If multiple vaccines are administered at a single visit, the CDC does recommend that each injection be in a different injection site.

[Best practices](#) for multiple injections include:

- Label each syringe with the name and the dosage (amount) of the vaccine, lot number, the initials of the preparer, and the exact beyond-use time, if applicable.
- Separate injection sites by 1 inch or more, if possible.
- **Administer the COVID-19 vaccines and vaccines that may be more likely to cause a local reaction in different limbs, if possible.**

Additional resources on the CDC Website:

- [CDC Influenza Communication Resource Center](#)
- [CDC Partnering for Vaccine Equity](#)
- [CDC Communication Resources for COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

## COVID -19 Boosters Approved | Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Janssen (Johnson and Johnson)

Following [Emergency Use Authorizations](#) from the Food and Drug Administration October 20, 2021, the CDC provided [updated recommendations](#) for COVID-19 booster shots. The CDC has created a [webpage](#) to help long-term care providers access the booster dose.

COVID-19 booster shots are now recommended for the following groups of individuals who received a **Pfizer-BioNTech** or **Moderna COVID-19 vaccine**, at 6 months or more after their initial series:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in [long term care settings](#)
- Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#)
- Age 18+ who work or live in [high-risk settings](#)

For those 18 and older that received the **Johnson & Johnson** COVID-19 vaccine two or more months ago, a booster shot is recommended.

**Eligible individuals can get a booster shot of a different brand if they choose to do so as the CDC is now allowing for mixing and matching product for the booster shot.**

## NEW! Additions to the Quality Measure Video Series

Great Plains QIN's [Quality Measure Video Series and Tip Sheets](#) are designed for those involved with MDS coding, quality improvement and leadership. Each video is approximately 20 to 30 minutes and includes the recording, slide deck, transcript and tip sheet.

Coding correctly and understanding what makes something trigger in a quality measure are keys to improving QM scores, which ultimately affect your CMS Five Star rating, funding, and reputation.

### New Additions

- ✓ Made Improvement in Function (SS)
- ✓ ADL's Has Increased (LS)
- ✓ Ability to Move Independently Worsens (LS)

*"After viewing the two trainings - Understanding Influenza Quality Measures and Understanding Pneumococcal Quality Measures, we have implemented different ways to get our residents vaccinated prior to admission, especially for the pneumococcal vaccine since we are unable to give that in our facility. If they come from our local hospital, they will administer before discharge if the resident wants the vaccine. We are working on a plan to be able to get our remaining residents who are not vaccinated, but want the pneumococcal vaccine vaccinated! Thank you again for the video; it was very helpful."*

Brooke Sjomeling, MDS Coordinator  
Walworth Care Center - Selby, South Dakota

## November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and National Family Caregivers Month

Submitted by Alzheimer's Association of Minnesota/North Dakota and South Dakota



Alzheimer's disease doesn't just affect the person with the diagnosis – it also impacts their families and friends, especially those who provide care for them. As a caregiver, one of the most important things you can do is carve out time for yourself. Try to make this a conscious effort every day. It can be as simple as spending 10 minutes taking a walk, diving into the latest bestseller or weeding your garden. It's key to maintaining your own health and well-being. When you feel better, you can take better care of others.

Keep these simple steps in mind to ensure you find the time and resources to take care of yourself:

1. **Get regular physical activity.** Regular, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity — even in small increments — can boost your energy level. Exercise reduces stress, helps you maintain a healthy weight, and can help you keep your blood pressure and cholesterol at healthy levels.
2. **Maintain a heart-healthy diet.** A healthy diet will give you more energy. Eating well can help prevent other health problems, too. If you must “eat on the run,” try to choose nutritious snacks.
3. **Make time for yourself.** Take time every day for an activity you enjoy, such as reading, walking, crafts, cooking or listening to music. Whatever makes you happy and relaxes you can be therapeutic.
4. **Keep humor in your life.** It's true — laughter is good medicine. Try to find humor in your life every day. Watch a silly TV program or go to a movie that tickles your funny bone. Find things to laugh about with those in your care — they need joy, too.
5. **Watch out for depression.** The demands placed on you as a caregiver can be difficult and stressful. If you are experiencing signs of depression, talk to your health care professional. Often, depression can be managed with talk therapy or medication.
6. **Keep medical and dental appointments.** Do all you can to maintain your health. If you're sick, you won't be able to care for others.
7. **Think positive.** Take time every day to refresh your mind.

The [Alzheimer's Association](https://www.alz.org) is a worldwide health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support, and research. Its mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. More information is available at [alz.org](https://www.alz.org) or the 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900.

## CMS Updated Web-based Section GG Training for MDS Assessment and Coding

CMS's Section GG training is online and consists of three courses that includes interactive exercises to test your knowledge related to the assessment and coding of Section GG items:

- [Course 1: Understanding Prior Functioning and Prior Device Use](#)
- [Course 2: GG0130. Self-Care Items](#)
- [Course 3: GG0170. Mobility Items](#)

Questions about the logistics of training sessions? Email [PAC Training mailbox](#).  
Questions about Skilled Nursing Facility content? Email [SNF QRP Help Desk](#)



### NHSN LTCF Quick Links

- [Vaccination Weekly HCP & Resident COVID-19 Module](#)
- [COVID-19 LTCF Module Main Webpage](#)
- [Data Quality Alerts: Weekly COVID-19 Vaccination Modules](#)
- [Data Quality Alerts: COVID19 Pathways Module.](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Data Document](#)
- [NHSN Point of Care Testing Reporting Tool Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [NHSN LTC COVID-19 Module How to Re-Assign the Facility Administrator](#)

### NHSN TIP If Leaving a Facility

- Take your SAMS Grid Card. It stays with the person, not the facility.
- Reassign NHSN Fac Administrator User rights prior to leaving

### Great Plains QIN Quick Tips for Obtaining NHSN Access

- [Adding Additional Users to NHSN/Level 1 Security Vs Level 3 Security](#)
- [I have NHSN Level 1 Security. How Do I Get Level 3 Security?](#)
- [I haven't Received the SAMS Invite to Upload my Identity Documents. What Can I Do?](#)
- [I Haven't Received my SAMS Grid Card. What Can I Do?](#)



## CDC and CMS Resources and Updates

### CDC

- [COVID Data Tracker](#) - Check your community transmission rate. Updated Daily at 8pm – New!
- [Interim IP Control Recommendations to Prevent SARS-COV-2 Spread in NHs](#) Updated 9/10/21
- [Interim IP Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During COVID-19](#) Updated 9/10/2021
- [Interim Guidance Managing Healthcare Personnel w SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure](#) Updated 9/10/2021
- [Ending Isolation and Precautions for People w COVID-19: Interim Guidance](#) Updated 9/14/2021
- [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](#) Updated 9/16/2021
- [Selected Adverse Events Reported after COVID-19 Vaccination](#) Updated 9/14/2021
- [FAQs about COVID-19 Vaccination in LTCFs](#) Updated 9/9/2021
- [COVID -19 Vaccines for LTC Facility Residents](#) Updated 8/31/21

### CMS

- [QSO-20-38-NH IFR LTC Facility Testing Requirements/ COVID Focused Survey](#) Rev 9/10/2021
- [QSO-20-41-all-revised-Guidance related to Emergency Preparedness Exercise Exemption](#) 6/21/2021
- [QSO-21-19-NH: IFR COVID19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents and Staff](#) 5/11/2021
- [QSO-20-39 NH: Nursing Home Visitation COVID19](#) 4/27/2021
- [QSO-21-15-ALL Updated Guidance Emergency Preparedness - Appendix Z of SOM](#) 3/26/2021
- [QSO-20-31-All: Revised COVID-19 Survey Activities, Enhanced Enforcement for Infection Control deficiencies & QI Activities in Nursing Homes](#) 1/4/2021

Are you a front-line health care worker or a student training to become one? Are you wanting to learn more about infection prevention and control or looking for a refresher training course? **North Dakota Department of Health Project Firstline (PFL) has the IPC trainings that work for you!**

**Launching November 9, a 5-part infection prevention and control live training series is available for ALL healthcare worker and students via the GoToWebinar online platform. Free CEU's are available through the North Dakota Board of Nursing.**

**To register for live training sessions, visit:**  
[www.health.nd.gov/projectfirstline](http://www.health.nd.gov/projectfirstline)



**NDDoH Project Firstline is launching a new series of infection prevention and control trainings that are available for all health care workers and students.**

**Training Sessions:**

- Virus Strains - Tuesday, November 9th 12:00pm-1:00pm
- Multi-dose vials - Tuesday, November 16th 12:00pm-1:00pm
- Hand Hygiene - Tuesday, November 30th 12:00-12:30pm
- PPE Part 1: Eye Protection - Tuesday, December 7th 12:00-12:30pm
- PPE Part 2: Gowns and Gloves - Tuesday, December 14th 12:00-12:30pm

*Live training sessions will be offered online  
Continuing Education credits offered through ND Board of Nursing  
Questions? Email us at [dohpfl@nd.gov](mailto:dohpfl@nd.gov)*

To register for live training sessions, visit our website:  
[www.health.nd.gov/projectfirstline](http://www.health.nd.gov/projectfirstline)



Questions? Email [dohpfl@nd.gov](mailto:dohpfl@nd.gov)

**South Dakota Project Firstline (PFL) announces a new interactive website** that offers infectious disease control training videos and resources:  
[www.sdprojectfirstline.org](http://www.sdprojectfirstline.org).



Project Firstline is a national **TRAINING** initiative for frontline

healthcare workers from the CDC that's being rolled out across the nation and is now in South Dakota!



*"To STOP the spread of infectious diseases threats, including COVID-19, new strains of flu and other emerging diseases, anyone working in a healthcare facility or on the frontline needs to understand infection control,"* said Stephan Schroeder, MD, Medical Director South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care. *"This website has the latest CDC training videos available. It's a terrific resource for South Dakota."*

The trainings are **short** (each video is about 5 minutes), **timely** (containing the newest CDC information), **easy to understand** (from basic to advanced levels), and best of all, it's **FREE**. *Just click and GO!*

South Dakota PFL partners are the South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care, South Dakota Department of Health, and the CDC. Visit the [website](http://www.sdprojectfirstline.org) to preview and or take the free trainings.

**Questions?** Email: [Cheri Fast, PFL Manager](mailto:Cheri.Fast@sdprojectfirstline.org)  
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[www.greatplainsqin.org](http://www.greatplainsqin.org)



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