

# Quality Highlights

FIRST QUARTER 2011



## Golden Living Enhances Clinical Team With Pharmacists



Managing medications is a complex process, especially for patients of skilled nursing facilities, many of whom have chronic conditions and are prescribed several different medications. To better ensure the safe and appropriate use of medications for Golden LivingCenter patients, Golden Living is adding clinical pharmacists to our interdisciplinary clinical teams.

As shown in Golden Living pilot studies, this approach has helped reduce falls, rehospitalizations, medication errors, and the number of medications that our patients are prescribed.

Golden Living pharmacists and pharmacy assistants with Golden Clinical Rx Solutions™, a new internal consulting pharmacy service company, will review patients' records before they are admitted to a LivingCenter. Specifically, the pharmacy team will assess patients' medications and work to address any questions with patients' physicians or the dispensing pharmacy.

Once a patient is admitted, the pharmacy team will work remotely and face-to-face with LivingCenter clinicians to monitor medications and conditions and to make recommendations to improve medication regimens. Their recommendations also may help reduce drug costs.

With the use of new technologies and frequent, direct communication with LivingCenter clinicians, the Golden pharmacy team will be accountable for improving patient outcomes. And that is great news for our patients.

# Patient Care Benefits From New Technology

Golden Living's commitment to providing our patients with quality care has driven our investment in technologies that can improve staff efficiency and effectiveness, enhance quality, and optimize patient outcomes. During 2010, Golden Living implemented new software in our LivingCenters and Aegis Therapies locations. Golden Living will roll out new software in our AseraCare Hospice and Home Health agencies in 2011.

Golden LivingCenters implemented a new software system known as **PointClickCare**®(PCC). The web-based system makes data entry easier and faster, enabling caregivers to spend more time with their patients. The system streamlines admissions and automates the assessment process required by the federal government for patients in Medicare- or Medicaid-certified nursing facilities. PCC includes a drug information library aimed at reducing drug interactions and allergic reactions to medications.

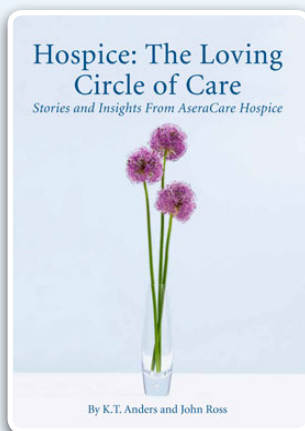
Aegis Therapies last year transitioned to a new software system known as **SMART**™, which helps therapists track therapy minutes, plan future therapy sessions, and access data that is helpful in decision-making. For example, the system can track patients' progress during their treatment, and therapists use this information to enhance therapy programs.

Golden Living's investment in these technologies helped ensure a smooth transition to significant regulatory changes that took effect in October.

Early this year, AseraCare began rolling out an updated version of its comprehensive practice management system, McKesson's **Horizon Homecare**™. The new Horizon Homecare Release 12.0 is remarkably intuitive and is a far less labor-intensive system than the previous version. Developed over three years using a web interface, Horizon Homecare Release 12.0 will quickly and smoothly transfer information and demographics, require far fewer "clicks," save clinicians time, and require minimal training to use.

The software investments are in addition to Golden Living's partnership with Microsoft® to implement a new data management system known as Amalga™ Unified Intelligence System (UIS). Amalga UIS will help improve clinical care, reduce costs, and increase communication with family members and physicians. The system also will facilitate integrated care between various Golden Living companies as patients transition to different care settings.

## AseraCare Hospice Publishes Book About the Hospice Journey



AseraCare Hospice has published a new book, *Hospice: The Loving Circle of Care*, which guides readers through the difficult process of deciding when to seek hospice. Hospice is a comprehensive, medically directed, team-oriented program of care that emphasizes individualized pain control and symptom

management, rather than curative treatment, for patients who no longer respond to routine medical care.

"Patients and family members often are apprehensive about hospice. Meanwhile, physicians and caregivers

may know the basics of hospice, but don't always know the human side of the story. AseraCare — one of the largest hospice providers in the United States — wanted to create a book that dispels the myths using real stories that come from people who provide care every day," said Peggy Durkin, AseraCare Regional Vice President.

The book highlights the benefits of hospice through more than 60 accounts of patient stories submitted by AseraCare caregivers across the country. Each story provides a real-life example of hospice and shows how caregivers often go beyond traditional measures to ensure a peaceful and comfortable end-of-life experience for each patient.

The book is free and available electronically on AseraCare's website at [www.aseracare.com](http://www.aseracare.com).

# Aegis Therapies Recognized as 2010 ICAA Innovator for WALK! with Aegis Therapies

The International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA) has selected Aegis Therapies to receive a 2010 ICAA Innovators Award for WALK! with Aegis Therapies, a five-day celebration of health and wellness that was conducted at nearly 600 locations around the country September 20-24.

Recognizing creativity and excellence in active aging, ICAA's annual awards program honors innovations that are leading the way, setting new standards, and making a difference in the lives of older adults.

Launched as a one-day event during Active Aging Week in 2009, WALK! with Aegis Therapies in 2010 expanded into a five-day program. Events featured other activities designed to encourage active aging and wellness. The events were structured to remind participants of the importance of nourishing their emotional and intellectual health, in addition to maintaining their physical well-being. Collectively, participants at sites across the nation walked 100,000 miles by the end of the week!

As an additional element of excitement, national fitness expert Chris Freytag made personal appearances at 10 WALK! with Aegis Therapies locations across the country. She also narrated a custom-made upbeat CD for participating sites to use during the week.

With more than 50,000 employee and patient participants, WALK! with Aegis Therapies was a worthwhile educational tool and a terrific morale booster for residents, patients, and staff.



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## Training Program Improves Management of Congestive Heart Failure

Golden Living is committed to keeping our patients as healthy as possible so that they may enjoy a good quality of life. With this goal in mind, we have introduced a new training program for our nurses and nursing assistants to even more effectively care for patients with congestive heart failure (CHF).

Some 5.7 million Americans suffer from CHF, a chronic and progressive disease that is the leading cause of rehospitalizations in the United States and which is a common condition among patients and residents of skilled nursing facilities. Our program reinforces nurses' and nursing assistants' knowledge of the causes of CHF and symptoms of the disease, such as tiredness, coughing, and swelling in the joints and extremities. Keeping this information in mind, these clinicians and caregivers can act on subtle indications that, if caught early, can greatly reduce complications from CHF.

The CHF training program includes realistic case studies to challenge nurses' and nursing assistants' critical-thinking skills and prepare them for real interventions. The program also provides nurses with the latest information on nutritional and medicinal protocols that can be used to manage CHF as well as palliative techniques that can help manage patients' pain and make them more comfortable.



## Golden Living Develops Tools to Better Manage Patient Medical Records

Few things have as much potential to reduce waste, increase efficiency, lower costs, and improve outcomes as the smart handling of patient information — a task that, done properly, can help clinicians avoid medical errors, make better and more timely diagnoses, and avoid redundant and costly tests. In light of this, Golden Living has made significant progress managing the medical record — the critical primary communication tool during the entire course of care for a patient. The medical record contains information on a patient's medical history, visits with clinicians, orders and prescriptions, progress notes, test results, and other pertinent data.

To help our staff better manage these records, Golden Living has created its first Health Information Management (HIM) manual, which will support the vital functions performed by the Health Information Coordinators at our LivingCenters. With the assistance of a number of educational tools being made available to our staff, the manual will help HIM departments employ the quality practices that reflect the professionalism and integrity of Golden Living.

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