

Belief, Ambition, and Action = Progress

“Every success story is a tale of constant adaptation, revision, and change.”

Richard Branson

In previous 2022 editions of *The Voice*, I provided information about the development of the QA/QI Training Program. As an update, under 651 CMR 12:04:10, assisted living residences are required to establish a QA/QI program “...to evaluate its operations and services to continuously improve services and operations, and to assure Resident health, safety, and welfare.”

Some time ago, Mass-ALA developed the *Assisted Living Quality Improvement Tool: A Tool to Assist with Regulatory Compliance and Quality Improvement*. This “Tool” has been an effective document in addressing operational issues in assisted living residences and aiding in the achievement and maintenance of high operating standards. It was intended, at its inception, to provide a format to assist ALRs in improving operations and monitoring compliance with regulations set forth by the state. As a recap, it was decided to begin 2022 with a strong effort to update “*the Tool*” to assist in identifying operational areas that may require further exploration, improvement, or recognition for excellence. Several modifications have been made over the years as the document was designed to be adaptive and flexible.

With the planned update of “*the Tool*” having been completed, the development of the new QA/QI Training Program was undertaken. I’m pleased to announce that the training program has been developed and will be offered beginning in September! This series takes a deep dive into the details of many issues, beginning with initial screenings and assessments, going into departmental requirements related to QA/QI, staffing/staffing levels, training requirements, plant maintenance, all facets of operational concerns, reporting requirements, safety, risk management, and much more. Where Boot Camp leaves off in providing an extensive overview of important operational information, the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Training Program will pick up and provide the details in a systematic approach that will be relevant, easy to follow, and immediately applicable to the operation of an assisted living residence.

As the tool was designed to be a guide to assisted living staff in conducting self-evaluations and to offer them indicators of quality and regulatory compliance, the training program has been developed utilizing the same goals. It can be viewed as an extension of Boot Camp, perhaps being called a deeper dive into the general overview provided at Boot Camp, being compared to a sort of Boot Camp II, without actually bearing that title. The training, along with the implementation of quality assurance measures, can also be an effective tool to help assisted living residences to prepare for recertification surveys by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

The amount of work and time involved in updating “*the Tool*” and developing the QA/QI Training Program have been significant, but the process essentially took on a life of its own. We

were completely convinced of the need for this program and as we worked hard to develop it, we could see the light at the end of the tunnel and craved the end product so intensely that the actual work became irrelevant. A situation such as that is fertile ground for growth and it was rewarding, to say the least, to be involved in such meaningful work. I'm proud of the program that has been developed and eager to share it with those who will take it and run with it as they provide the best possible care for older adults in assisted living. Registration will be open soon for Training Module 1, which will be offered on September 13th, 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

This first module will provide training on the following:

- An overview of the QA/QI Tool
- Quality Assurance Evaluation/Monitoring
- Assisted Living Regulations
- Performance Requirements/Expectations

In the coming weeks, we will send out more detailed information about what to anticipate as we roll out the complete training program. For the September 13th module, we are also seeking individuals who might be interested in being trained as trainers for this program. Those of you who have considerable experience in operating an assisted living community are encouraged to reach out to me to discuss the possibility of taking part in the first module in a “train the trainer” capacity. You will be provided with all the information you would need to lead people through the training and “*the Tool.*”

We all know that operating an assisted living community is not an easy job, especially while facing the challenges presented during a pandemic. In the best of circumstances, it is demanding and often stressful, challenging, and frustrating; however, the difficulties that we have faced, and will continue to face, have not stopped us. Instead, for so many, it has called out our strength, creativity, courage, and resolve. We envision the best outcomes and work toward that, knowing that the end result will be rewarding and will have a tremendous impact on those we care for on a daily basis. At Mass-ALA, we recognize and appreciate your hard work. In addition to having a positive impact on your residents and staff, you have saved lives! Your work couldn't be more meaningful!

My plan is to continue to provide you with education and support that will enable you to work with less stress, more confidence, and the acquisition of increased knowledge that comes from hard work and dedication, which will result in optimal care for your residents, staff, and even yourself. Please log onto the Mass-ALA website to view the education calendar for the rest of 2022. I'd particularly like to call your attention to a webinar we have scheduled on July 27th, which will provide all the necessary elements of successful medication management in assisted living. You may access the registration page [here](#) for this event.

As always, I invite you to reach out with any suggestions you might have on topics you'd like to see offered that will meet the needs of assisted living residents and staff. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas on educational events and topics at lcashman@mass-ala.org

Wishing you a summer filled with warmth, laughter, leisurely days in the sun, an appreciation for life, and a renewed energy for the tremendous work you do for your residents and staff.

Warmest regards,

Laurie

Laurie Cashman, Mass-ALA Director of Education