



## January 2016 Commitment to Care Quality Topic

### Success with Reducing Antipsychotic Medications

#### *Member Spotlight on Garden Terrace Alzheimer's Center of Excellence*

**Welcome** to 2016. It's the first month of a new year and a great time to celebrate success. Nancy Flowers the Director of Nursing at Garden Terrace Alzheimer's Center of Excellence (Garden Terrace) in Houston was reading about the **One a Month** Campaign and contacted me to share her own experiences with reducing antipsychotic medications. She states they called their initiative '**One Resident at a Time**', familiar ring wouldn't you say...

I recently visited Nancy and some of her team to find out more about her lessons learned.

#### ***Digging for the WHY***

Nancy started at Garden Terrace in February of 2015 and during a visit of her SVP of Clinical Services, Christi Card, it was brought to Nancy's attention that the facility quality measures showed a high rate of *Long Stay Antipsychotic Use*, 38.2%. Like many DONs this discussion motivated her to dig deeper into why they had such a high rate, Nancy wanted to be sure that the antipsychotics were necessary. She immediately began doing a root cause analysis and what she found gave her several areas for improvement. Common to many homes, the first thing she identified by talking with her staff was that when a resident had difficult behaviors the first response was to request a referral of the psychiatrist, whose first response was to order an antipsychotic. Nancy knew this wasn't best practice so she dug deeper. She looked at each resident that flagged on her resident listing with an ordered antipsychotic and talked with the staff and identified that the primary issue for most of the residents was UNMET NEEDS. Nancy was shocked. She had already been working with Carla Smith, RN, a Quality Improvement Consultant with the TMF Health Quality Institute QIN, who was instrumental with helping her identify tools their facility could use for QAPI and how to develop Performance Improvement Projects. The TMF QIN projects are federally funded and therefore are no cost to the facility.

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***“I found a plethora of valuable information on the TMF website and when I read the material and studies available on the site I began to implement some of the interventions and strategies in order to help those residents with dementia transition positively off of antipsychotics.” Nancy Flowers RN, BSN, C-NE, Director of Nursing, Garden Terrace, Life Care Centers of America (LCCA)***

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### ***Interventions must be individualized***

Of course the key to success is making sure that interventions are appropriate for the individual resident, starting with basic needs. In order to best meet resident needs the Garden Terrace Interdisciplinary Team (IDT), including the Medical Director conducted care plan meetings within 72 hours of admission in addition to pain and behavior meetings weekly. Nancy’s focus was on the individual resident and she was determined to identify best practices so that each resident that was appropriate for antipsychotic reduction would have a smooth transition while titrating them off the medication. During her research Nancy identified two non-pharmalogical interventions to implement for residents that were appropriate. One was Lavender Lotion. Nancy mixes the lavender essential oil with unscented lotion and the staff use it to message the residents that have it care planned for them.

The second change implemented was Music Therapy. While the facility is not currently in the Music and Memory Program that DADS has, she took it upon herself to implement the program with assistance from the rest of the IDT. IPOD’s are loaded with personalized playlists for each resident appropriate for the program, by a member of the Therapy staff and Music Therapy is added to the residents care plan. Nancy shared that “It’s really about changing the beliefs of the staff”.

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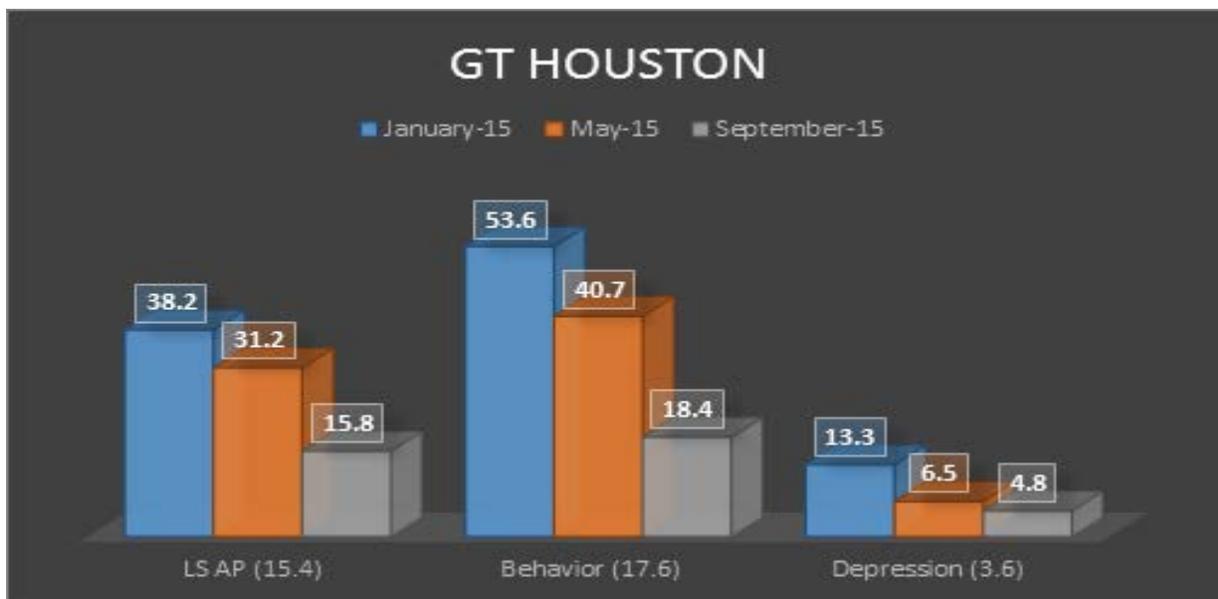
***Cynthia Powell an LVN at Garden Terrace who works on one of the Memory Care Units that uses the Music Therapy said, “I have to admit at first I was skeptical, but now I’m a believer!”***

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Nancy reports that families are excited about the changes in their loved ones too. The resident responses to the Music Therapy have crossed the spectrum, from starting to smile and tapping their foot to crying.

### ***What about the Data***

Not only has the facility's *Long Stay Antipsychotic Use* rate dropped from 38.2% in January 2015 to 31.2% in March and then took a plunge to 15.8% in September of 2015 but other balancing measures also took a dive. As you can see by the graph, Behaviors started at 53.6% in January and continued to drop to 40.7% and then down to 18.4% in September of the same time period. Depression also dropped from 13.3% in January to 6.5% and then 4.8% in September. Data like that spells success.



### ***Lessons learned***

- An additional set of eyes and recommendations can be extremely valuable in motivating facility leaders to look for opportunities for improvement, such as Corporate or Contract Nurse Consultants
- Data monitoring is critical for improvement and identifying success
- Facilities can be successful in reducing antipsychotics for some residents without increases in behavior or depression
- Staff can change their beliefs and practice
- QAPI is the way to create change
- Seeking assistance from experts is a great way to glean ideas that work

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***“I am so proud of Nancy and her team”, said Christi Card, SVP of Clinical Services with LCCA, “Many times we’ve heard the excuse that antipsychotics are high due to the Alzheimer’s/dementia population...Nancy has proven all those wrong, epically since her entire patient population have those diagnosis.”***

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While the data shows that Garden Terrace is now below both the State and the Nation as their rates are 21.36% and 16.97% respectively, Nancy’s not done yet. She continues to look for opportunities to reduce the last few residents taking antipsychotics and continues to talk with Carla at TMF regularly by phone, for technical assistance on quality related topics, seeking to provide the very best care possible for the residents at Garden Terrace!

Written by Gloria Bean-Williams RN, THCA Director of Clinical and Quality Services