



CASE STUDY



Improving Discharge Function Scores

Good Shepherd Home is a nonprofit Life Plan Community located in Fostoria, Ohio. Seeking to improve its Discharge Function Score, Good Shepherd turned to Functional Pathways, its long-time therapy partner, to collaborate on a solution. Functional Pathways implemented its DFS Improvement Process throughout the community, delivering short-term wins and sustainable results.

Why It's Important

The Discharge Function Score (DFS) reflects the real-world outcomes of therapy and nursing care. It is a quality measure that aligns with the goal of reducing rehospitalizations, increasing resident functional outcomes, and enabling smoother transitions back to the community or lower levels of care. As one of the quality metrics reported on the Care Compare site, it is a key metric for families, referral sources, and payers evaluating quality of care.

Functional Pathways Process

One key element of Functional Pathways' process is to ensure the most accurate coding of resident functional levels at both admission and discharge. This affords the opportunity to improve outcomes as reported by the percentage of residents meeting the expected Discharge Function measure, thereby improving resident quality of life and community performance on Quality Measures.

Functional Pathways Clinical Team provided training and consulting to all Good Shepherd front-line therapists and nursing staff throughout the process, including:

- Education and review of iQIES reports
- Training on the key components that make up the Discharge Function Score
- Highlighting best practices for discharge planning
- Training on appropriate goal setting

Key steps in the implementation process included:

- Establishing a baseline
- Documenting GG items on MDS
- Ongoing monitoring of outcomes
- Developing action items based on causes identified above
- Tracking results
- Setting up a plan for ongoing monitoring, auditing, and training

Results

Because the DFS is calculated based on twelve months of data, it can take several quarters to realize results. Early indications demonstrate **an initial 22% increase in the discharge function score** over four quarters, with further improvement expected. Given that the DFS is part of the CMS Value Based Purchasing program, **the community can expect an increase in the community's incentive payments as well as an overall improvement in their 5 Star Quality Rating and resident quality of life.**

“Working in collaboration with our Functional Pathways Clinical Team and the MDS staff at Good Shepherd Home, we were able to yield positive results and make significant improvements in the facility DFS in a brief period of time. The ongoing education from FP has been paramount to our facility's success.”



—Stacey Schubert, Director of Rehab