

# Study Shows Satisfied Employees Predict Satisfied Families

## Wins 2004 'Paper of the Year' From National Investment Center

ANNAPOLIS, Md. - Employee satisfaction is a highly reliable barometer of how family members of residents rate the quality of care in nursing homes, according to an article based on the results of a large-scale study about consumer and staff experiences in Georgia nursing facilities.

The article, Organizational Predictors of Family Satisfaction in Nursing Facilities, which was written by Leslie A. Grant, Ph.D., director of the Center for Aging Services Management at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, was recognized as the 2004 Paper of the Year by the peer-reviewed Seniors Housing & Care Journal. The Journal, published annually by the National Investment Center for the Seniors Housing & Care Industries (NIC), features articles on critical issues faced by providers in the senior living industry.

Grant's article showed that facilities with more satisfied families also have more satisfied employees. "These employees report better training, better supervision, better management and better work environments," he said. "Conversely, facilities with more satisfied employees have more satisfied families. These families are more satisfied with the care provided to their relative, including the quality of life, quality of care, and the quality of service."

"Core organizational processes that drive performance in one area simultaneously drive performance in other areas," he added. "This finding is consistent with the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award framework in that providers can improve performance and family satisfaction by focusing on employees. Improvements like better supervision, more responsive management, and quality of the work environment for employees make a big difference to families."

He continued by pointing out that "while it seems intuitive that the two stakeholder groups closest to nursing home residents - family members and employees - should agree on quality of care, this is the first time we have seen such conclusive evidence of the strong association between the experiences of these two groups."

Grant's study is based on data generated by My InnerView, a quality measurement and management company based in Wausau, Wis. The company surveyed 10,547 family members and 11,890 employees in more than 90 percent of Georgia's 347 nursing facilities. Starting in August of 2003, each facility also submitted monthly performance data using a Web-based data entry system. These indicators included clinical outcomes, quality of life, quality of care, financial performance, human resources and regulatory compliance.

Robert G. Kramer, president of NIC, and John Cobb, senior vice president, GE Healthcare Financial Services, presented the 2004 Paper of the Year award to Grant during a presentation at NIC's fall conference in Chicago. GE Healthcare Financial Services, one of the world's leading finance companies with over 50 years experience financing the healthcare segment, sponsored the award with its monetary gift of \$3,000.

“Unprecedented data leads to unprecedented results,” said Kramer. “The implications of Dr. Grant’s research are profound. According to this refreshing new view, core organizational systems such as leadership, information systems, human resources, clinical systems, operations, and environmental design all act in concert to drive excellence,” he said.

Other findings from the study include:

- Smaller facilities have higher family and employee satisfaction than larger facilities;
- Non-profit facilities have higher family satisfaction than for-profit facilities;
- Independent facilities and moderate-sized chains have higher family satisfaction than other facilities; and,
- Rural facilities have higher family satisfaction than urban and suburban facilities.

“We are only beginning to get a clear picture of how core organizational processes and systems drive performance,” said Grant. “In coming months, we will begin looking at a wider range of outcomes. For example, how does staff turnover affect clinical processes and outcomes? We are beginning to see evidence that it has a negative influence on clinical outcomes, state survey compliance, and customer satisfaction. How do leadership and organizational culture affect performance? Without strong leadership and a culture of quality, performance improvement is not sustainable,” he said.

Other articles in the 2004 Seniors Housing & Care Journal address reaching new markets with the “community café” model, factors associated with successful sales presentations, reconciling seniors housing starts, and the relationship between exercise level and cognitive decline. David A. Lindeman, Ph.D., director of the Evanston, Ill.-based Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging, served as managing editor and oversaw the process of selecting the winning paper. Copies of the publication are available for \$95 on [www.NIC.org](http://www.NIC.org) <<http://www.NIC.org>> or by calling (410) 267-0504.

Founded in 1991, NIC is a nonprofit organization providing information about business strategy and capital formation for the senior living industry. Proceeds from its annual conference - scheduled next for September 28-30, 2005, in Washington, DC - are used to fund research on issues of importance to the industry.

My InnerView’s breakthrough Web technologies allow provider organizations to monitor, benchmark, manage and improve quality. Services are built on a three-tiered series of products: family and employee satisfaction surveys, the Quality Profile™ comparison tool, and the Risk Monitor™ awareness report. The company is supported by industry-leading practitioners, academics and technology professionals. More than 1,000 skilled nursing, assisted living, residential care and senior housing facilities in 37 states are using My InnerView’s evidence-based management system.

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Note to the Editor: Photos are available of the NIC Conference award presentation to Dr. Leslie A. Grant, author of the winning paper, by calling Renee Tilton at (410) 626-0805.

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