

# Improving nursing home care has easy solution—hire advanced nurses

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Nursing homes hoping to provide the best care to their residents need to budget for hiring advance practice registered nurses (APRNs) to work full time. Continued research from a team of nursing experts at the University of Missouri has resulted in significant evidence that APRNs have a positive effect on improving outcomes for nursing home residents.

"Never before have there been such clear findings of the impact of APRNs on quality measures that are key to five-star ratings for all [nursing homes](#) in the country," said Marilyn Rantz, Curators Professor of Nursing in the Sinclair School of Nursing at MU. "Star ratings are used by consumers when they are trying to find the best quality of care for their loved ones."

Since 2012, Rantz has been leading the Missouri Quality Initiative for Nursing Homes, a partnership between MU, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and state Medicaid groups that was initiated to improve care at nursing facilities in the St. Louis area. Since its launch, the effort has significantly reduced hospitalizations and lowered [health care costs](#). In the latest study, Rantz and her team examined the specific impact APRNs had on quality measures used in nursing homes.

APRNs were embedded full time in 16 nursing homes that were participating in the nursing home initiative. They were expected to help the nursing home staff and leadership reduce unnecessary hospital and emergency room visits; improve resident health outcomes; and reduce

overall [health care spending](#). Their efforts were compared to 27 nursing homes that didn't have full-time APRNs on staff. Overall the nursing homes with APRNs had much better results in commonly used measures of quality of care, including fewer:

- Falls that led to major injury.
- Residents who experienced pressure ulcers and urinary tract infections.
- Residents who had a catheter left in their bladder, had to be physically restrained or had lost too much weight.
- Residents who required assistance with physical activities or needed antipsychotic medication.

"We were really excited to see these results to help consumers and providers offer the best care for their residents," Rantz said. "Hiring APRNs is a common-sense solution as they keep residents healthier and reduce avoidable hospitalizations."

"Impact of advanced practice registered nurses on [quality measures](#): the Missouri Quality Initiative Experience," was recently published in *JAMDA*, the *Journal of American Medical Directors Association*.

Rantz's pioneering work in nursing homes' care quality spans more than 30 years. She is regarded as a premier international expert in quality measurement in nursing homes and research programs to improve the [quality](#) of care of older people.

**More information:** Marilyn J. Rantz et al. Impact of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses on Quality Measures: The Missouri Quality Initiative Experience, *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association* (2017). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jamda.2017.10.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamda.2017.10.014)

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