

Meeting Advancing Excellence Goals with The Eden Alternative®

Process Goal: Reduce Hospitalizations Safely

by Denise Hyde

Description & rationale: Nursing home residents are often sent to emergency rooms or hospitals when a chronic condition worsens or an acute illness, such as pneumonia, develops. When nursing home staff is prepared and have the skills to treat residents with more serious illnesses on-site, residents benefit by avoiding transfer trauma and other negative consequences of hospital admissions. Working on this goal will enable staff to safely care for residents on-site using evidence-based tools and practices to reduce rates of hospitalization without compromising a resident's well-being or wishes.



How The Eden Alternative strengthens this goal: Collecting data on 30-day re-hospitalization rates is something Eden Registry Members are doing annually. Eden Registry Members successfully reducing this measure demonstrate consistently that learning about [Eden Alternative Principle Seven](#) and the depth and breadth to which it can be integrated into medical practice, is very important. The Eden Alternative has not developed resources targeting this goal. However, by using the Ten Principles to drive personal and organizational transformation, improvement happens. Eden Registry Members are addressing this goal by:

- Placing strong, caring relationships at the core of how life is lived in long-term care settings. When care partners are well-known to one another, the subtle changes in routine can be spotted more quickly and addressed before hospitalization is needed.
- Sending along employee or volunteer care partners along with the Elder, if hospitalization is needed, to help the Elder become well-known to the hospital employees. This ensures a better healing experience and quicker return home.
- Encouraging employee care partners to develop new skills in managing more acute conditions as they arise. Thus, the need to send Elders to the hospital is reduced. Growth and team empowerment ([Principles Nine and Ten](#)) drive this improvement. It is also about shifting the role of the clinical professionals, which is addressed in [Path to Mastery Milestones 2 and 3](#).
- Working together as a care partner team ensures that all medical treatment and medications are optimized for the individual Elder. This is covered in [Path to Mastery Milestones 3 and 4](#), along with tools to guide teams through the process.
- Holding and documenting end-of-life discussions to ensure that the Elder's wishes are honored.
- Teaching the [Eden Alternative Principles](#) to those who work in the hospital, so they too can adopt the Philosophy in the care they provide.
- Ensuring the Elder is surrounded by familiar items during hospitalization, including their companion animals in some cases.
- Helping Elder care partners to play a part in caring for one another, when someone from their community is in the hospital. This may include sending cards, letters, making phone calls, baking treats or visiting in person. This is [Eden Alternative Principle Four](#) in action!

In addition, The Eden Alternative has acquired Wellspring. Therefore, Wellspring's materials are being adopted and updated to assist nurses in developing person-directed care practices. Eden Registry Members have experience with INTERACT tools and The Eden Alternative is working on a grant project to bring the Principles and practices of the Philosophy into the education and use of this tool set.