

Gold Star Employer

Work Book

2005



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Sponsored by the

Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living

in partnership with the

Vermont Health Care Association

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Flint Springs Consulting - 2004

Revised 2005 – Gold Star Council

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Introduction to Gold Star Program

The Gold Star Employer Program is designed to recognize nursing homes that employ *Best Practices* for recruitment and retention of caregivers, particularly direct care staff. Research in Vermont and elsewhere in the nation has shown that several different approaches, referred to in this document as *Best Practices*, lead to improved recruitment and retention rates. Successful recruitment and retention, in turn, contribute to improved quality of care for residents, improved employee and resident satisfaction.



A committee composed of administrators and directors of nursing from several Vermont nursing homes, as well as representatives of Vermont Health Care Association (VHCA), Office of Nursing Workforce, Community of Vermont Elders (COVE), and Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) developed the Gold Star Employer Program. A survey of all VHCA member nursing homes also played a key role in developing the program.

Every nursing home in Vermont is eligible for Gold Star Employer recognition. Nursing homes that receive this recognition demonstrate use of one *Best Practice* in their recruitment and/or retention approaches.

The following discussion provides more information on *Best Practices* and the process for achieving Gold Star Employer recognition.

Best Practices

Identifying specific *Best Practices* was based on extensive research within Vermont and elsewhere in the nation. The committee looked for work place approaches that had demonstrated a positive impact on recruitment and retention. Of particular concern was the impact on direct care staff such as Licensed Nursing Assistants.

Based on this research, *Best Practices* were identified in seven different areas:

1. Staff recruitment
2. Orientation and training
3. Staffing levels and work hours
4. Professional development and advancement
5. Supervision training and practices
6. Team approaches
7. Staff recognition and support

Specific practices within each of these areas have been shown to improve employee retention. The Gold Star Employer Program is based on promoting practices within these seven areas. Examples of practices are outlined in the following pages.

Staff Recruitment

1. Staff Recruitment

- Community outreach & involvement: Nursing home partners with local high school to place students for community service requirement.
- Collaboration with other agencies: Multiple nursing homes work together to advertise for and train new workers.
- Screen for successful employees: Nursing home has a multi-step application process that includes initial interview, written test, facility tour, call-back requirements, and meeting with staff; nursing home offers entry level position such as Geri-Aid or Valet which can lead to LNA training for interested employees.
- Honest description of job duties and expectations: Nursing home provides opportunity for prospective employee to ask questions of present employees in similar position.
- Direct care workers are involved in recruitment, interviewing, developing interview questions and conducting tour of facility with prospective employees.

Orientation and Training

2. Orientation and Training

- Standardized orientation that provides consistent, well-developed orientation program covering information new employees need in order to understand all aspects of the organization (e.g., printed orientation manual that includes all personnel policies, appropriate information on resident care policies and procedures, and organizational structure).
- Regular follow-up with new staff: Weekly meeting with supervisor.
- Hands-on training specific to required tasks & responsibilities, such as expanded LNA training to provide three weeks of classroom instruction and two weeks on the unit for orientation and clinical experience.
- Mentoring and support for new employees: Trained mentors such as LNAII provide orientation and training; new staff are paired with long-term employees.

Staffing Levels and Work Hours

3. Staffing Levels and Work Hours

- Stable, reliable hours sufficient to meet employee's needs.
- Flexible scheduling: Weekend program that pays for 36 hours when staff work 24 hours; work 72 hours on night shift over two weeks and get paid for 80 hours.
- Worker control over hours: Weekly unit meeting to determine assignments and hours for each staff member.
- Overtime is not coercive, pressured or frequently requested: Track overtime hours, examine patterns to identify problem areas and seek to keep overtime at a minimum.
- Safe work loads: Determine comfortable staffing levels for good patient outcomes, quality of care, and patient acuity levels; carefully screen patients for admission and only accept patients when adequate staffing is in place to provide needed care.
- Adequate staffing and time for employees to perform tasks: Ensure appropriate staffing levels to provide coverage when staff members call in sick.

Professional Development and Advancement

4. Professional Development and Advancement

- Career lattices, which provide specific structures to develop skills, increase responsibilities, and increase wages (e.g., LNA II program that provides training in mentoring, coaching, and leadership skills; increases job responsibilities in these areas; and brings increased wages).
- Cross disciplinary training: Skill development across units or departments to enable employees to float across areas of facility.
- Mentoring programs for experienced staff to mentor newer staff (e.g., LNA II program; other mentoring training programs within different nursing home job areas).
- Training in specialized care: ACE Program to provide Alzheimer's care; pain management programs; palliative care programs.
- Ongoing training opportunities on site or through financial support of other programs such as tuition reimbursement programs to enable LNAs to train as LPNs, LPNs to train for RN; partnerships with local colleges to develop leadership training programs.

Supervision: Training and Practices

5. Supervision: Training and Practices

- Training for all supervisory staff on cultural competence, problem solving, communication, and coaching skills (e.g., specific training programs for supervisory staff including funded seminars).
- Provide management staff with tools needed to succeed: Adequate time available for supervisors to mentor and coach direct care staff; coaching and supervision for managers to learn from situations and mistakes; administration support for management decisions.
- Accessible management and supervisory staff: Administration literally keeps office door open.
- Demonstrate/model attitudes and behavior: Demonstrate respect by knowing and using workers' names; administrator and other leadership demonstrate good supervisory practices.
- Treat each employee as important to achieving facility mission.
- Specific, measurable job descriptions that can be used to conduct performance reviews of supervisory staff (e.g., use measures of quality and staff absenteeism and turnover to assess supervision).

6. Team Approach

Team Approaches

- Direct care staff involved in patient care planning: Regular team meetings to discuss care plans that include all service areas and employees who provide direct patient care.
- Shared responsibility for patient care and outcomes: Nurse managers work with staff on the floor to get the job done; explicit job expectation includes collaboration and "one team" approach.
- Permanent assignments to units or teams to promote development of relationships among team members.
- Team building activities are regularly scheduled and mandatory: Morning meeting with whole team, with management and supervisory staff required to attend.
- Regular meetings and communications to share information (e.g., white board with day's information, direct care staff meet with management).

- Staff involvement in problem solving and decision making: Employee Advisory Committee; problem solving teams.

Staff Recognition and Support

7. Staff Recognition and Support

- Multiple strategies to express appreciation and respect: Birthday celebrations, savings bonds for longevity, brag board for good deeds, employee of the month, staff appreciation events.
- Reward years of service with pay increases, gifts, and/or opportunities for advancement (e.g., mentoring, care specialization).
- “Personal touch” – name tags, mail boxes, voice mail, introductions to others in agency, “welcome new staff” board with photos, personal signatures & presentations of gifts/awards from administrator and/or director of nursing.
- Fun at work initiatives: Staff committee to develop events/activities, celebrate holidays; drama club.
- Counseling resources: Employee assistance program; arrangement with local therapist for counseling, facility covers co-pay.



Recognition Process

Gold Star Employer recognition is granted on an annual basis by the Gold Star Council. The Council includes nursing home administrators, directors of nursing, and direct care staff. The Department of Aging and Independent Living, the Vermont Health Care Association, the Community of Vermont Elders and the Office of Nursing Workforce are also on the Council. Other review team members include persons with expertise in human resources and direct care recruitment and retention issues.



Nursing homes seeking recognition apply to the Council. To apply, the nursing home completes a self-assessment on use of the *Best Practices* and then develops a plan for implementing a new *Best Practice* in the coming year or a significant expansion and continuation of your 2004 work plan. A review team will review the applications. Applications may be accepted as is, or accepted with modifications (for example, the nursing home may be asked to be more specific in its plan). At the end of the year, the nursing homes accepted into the program must document their progress toward achieving the goals outlined in their plan. The Council reviews the documentation and determines if Gold Star Employer designation can be awarded based on either achievement of designated goals or achievement of anticipated goals that have measurable quality outcome improvements.

Nursing homes are eligible for Gold Star Employer recognition whether or not they achieved the goals outlined in their plan. The documentation of the results of their activities and the challenges they actually faced need to explain why desired goals were achieved or were not successful. The lessons learned can be used in the next year's plan.

The Gold Star Program emphasizes the following:

- Instituting *Best Practices* relies on a team approach to planning and implementation.
- New practices may or may not lead to complete achievement of the desired goal. The important point is to understand, and document, what was done and why it did or did not work, whether or not the desired goal was achieved.
- This is an ongoing process. There is a value in learning from attempts that did not work as a way to improve practices in the future.

Gold Star Timeline
1 Cycle = 12 months ("any" year except '04)

Activity	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	October	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	March
<u>Complete Application</u> - Self-Assessment - Plan - ID resource needs													
<u>Application Review</u> - Team review - Council review of team recommendation - Notification of acceptance - or - - Request amended application - Revision of application - Revision review - Council/team - or - - Reject													
<u>Implementation</u> - Activity completion - Monitoring activities - Evaluating outcomes													
<u>Designation Decision</u> - Submit documentation - Review documentation - Review team - Recommend designation status - Review team - Council review recommendation - Grants/denies gold star designation													

Application Instructions

Overview of the Application Process

The Gold Star process depends on team effort. Discussion among team members is key to an accurate and useful self-assessment and plan. It is important to recognize that the different steps of the Gold Star process - **self-assessment, planning, and implementation of *Best Practices*** - are ongoing in nature and should reflect the individual character of your facility. Whatever way you choose, the first step in applying for Gold Star Employer Recognition is to convene a team.

STEP 1 Convene a team:

Assign one person the role of team leader or chair. The team leader will run team meetings and help the team use the workbook and its tools. The team should include the following members:

- Nursing home leaders, such as the administrator, director of nursing, or other upper level managers. The administrator should attend at least one meeting of the team to show his or her commitment to the team's results.
- Direct caregivers at all levels, such as RNs, LPNs, and LNAs. If you are including other departments, staff from those departments should also be on the team (for example, housekeeping, dietary, activities).

STEP 2 Conduct a Self-Assessment:

The next step in completing a Gold Star Employer application is to conduct a self-assessment. This workbook includes the self-assessment tool that you should use. The self-assessment tool helps you determine the degree to which your nursing home uses *Best Practices*. It will also help you choose a new *Best Practice* or decide to significantly expand your 2004 work plan in the coming year.

STEP 3 Develop Gold Star Plan:

The next step requires developing a plan for implementing the new *Best Practice*. The Gold Star Plan must focus on nursing care at minimum. You may, if you wish, include all departments in the nursing home.

For the Gold Star Plan you must select **one area of *Best Practice*** (i.e. Staff Recruitment). You may decide to begin new practices in several areas; however, the application should only discuss one of these areas in detail.

The planning charts will help you outline your goals, approaches, methods for documentation, and time lines (see Appendix 1 for example).

STEP 4 Complete Application Cover Sheet:

To apply for the Gold Star Employer Program, you must submit the completed planning charts along with the application cover sheet to the Council.

Applications may be submitted at any time from April through June. All applications must be received no later than June 15 to be considered for Gold Star recognition.

STEP 5 Submit Documentation to Gold Star Council:

At the end of the Gold Star annual cycle, you will submit the documentation forms. These forms will outline documentation of your approaches and the degree to which goals were achieved. The Gold Star Council will determine which nursing homes will be recognized as Gold Star Employers for that year by March 31.

Gold Star Application Kit

The Application Kit consists of the following:

- **Application Cover Sheet**
- **Self-Assessment Tool**
- **Planning Charts**

Gold Star Application Cover Sheet

Include this cover sheet in your application to the Gold Star Council. Attach a copy of the Self-Assessment Tool and Best Practice Plan for each Best Practice area selected (i.e., Goal Chart, Work Planning Chart, Challenges and Needed Assistance Form).

Name of Nursing Home: _____

of Beds in facility: _____ Total # of employees: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

Best Practice area we will pursue:

1. _____

Members of our Assessment and Planning Team(s):

Name	Nursing Home Position	Assessment Team member	Planning Team member

Mail completed application to:

**Gold Star Council
Vermont Health Care Association
617 Comstock Rd., Ste 8
Berlin, VT 05602**



Self-Assessment Tool

Instructions

The Best Practice Team uses the Self-Assessment Tool to:

1. Rate your nursing home on *Best Practices*:

This self-assessment tool asks several questions in each of the seven best practice categories about your nursing home's specific practices.

For each question, the team should rate your nursing home on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The team can do this in one of several ways. For example, the team could:

- Discuss each question as a group and agree on one rating for each question as a group. This decision could be either by consensus or vote.

Or

- Individually, each team member could rate each question. Then the team could come together to discuss each individual's rating and agree on a final rating.

Or

- Complete ratings by individual team members and then calculate an average score for each item.

Or

- Develop another way that works well for your nursing home...

2. Select *Best Practice* to Pursue:

The final step in conducting the self-assessment is to decide which practice(s) in each category are top priorities for your nursing home to pursue. At the end of each category's rating sheet you will find a set of questions. These should help create a discussion that leads your team to select a practice for this category.

Once again, teams can choose the approach that works best for choosing the best practice they want to pursue. They might:

- Decide on best practice priorities through team discussion of each question.

Or

- Individually answer prioritization questions and then share results with team.

Or

- Individually answer prioritization questions, tally scores of all the members and *Best Practices* based on the tally.

Or

- Develop another way that works well for your nursing home.

Staff Recruitment

Staff Recruitment Practices	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4
<i>A. Community outreach & involvement:</i>				
1. We use many different ways to reach new employees.				
2. We have relationships with community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations.				
3. We have partnerships with schools or other organizations to place volunteers in the nursing home.				
<i>B. Collaboration with other agencies:</i>				
1. We work with other agencies, including other nursing homes, in our area to do joint recruitment.				
<i>C. Screen for successful employees.</i>				
1. We have a picture of the ideal new hire based on the qualities (knowledge, skills, and traits) of employees we know tend to remain on the job.				
2. We schedule interviews in two parts so that candidates are asked to return for a second interview.				
3. We use a standard set of interview questions to gather information about the applicant's skills and values.				
<i>D. Honest description of job duties and expectations.</i>				
1. We have clear expectations and accurate job descriptions, especially for high turnover positions.				
2. We use realistic job previews to give possible new staff a correct idea of the job.				
3. We give new staff realistic information about stresses of the job.				
4. We give possible new hires an opportunity to ask questions of present employees about the job.				
<i>E. Involve direct care workers in recruitment, interviewing.</i>				
1. We have an effective employee referral bonus system.				
2. Employees know how to recruit and refer people that we might hire.				
3. We involve direct care workers in creating a list of characteristics of an ideal new employee.				
4. Direct care workers are part of the interview process.				
<i>F. Other staff recruitment practices we use or would like to use (describe):</i>				

Selecting Staff Recruitment Practices:

Look back at your scores for Staff Recruitment Practices. Items with scores of 1 or 2 should be considered first for your Gold Star Plan. Mark these items (use a highlighter or other mark).

To help you choose at least one item to include in your Gold Star Plan, answer these questions for each item you have marked. The top priority should go to the item with the most “yes” responses.

Practice 1: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 2: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 3: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 4: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

We have selected the following Staff Recruitment Practice to address in our Gold Star Plan:

(also include this to #1 on page 27)

Orientation and Training

Orientation and Training Practices	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4
<i>A. Standardized orientation</i>				
1. All new staff goes through the same orientation that covers information needed to understand all parts of the organization.				
<i>B. Regular follow-up with new staff</i>				
1. New employees have weekly meetings with supervisors during first few months of employment.				
2. New staff members are paired with a mentor or long-term employee to provide ongoing support and information				
<i>C. Hands-on training specific to required tasks & responsibilities</i>				
1. New staff “shadow” experienced staff and to be are prepared for the job.				
2. We include at least one week of time on the unit for hands-on learning as part of LNA training.				
<i>D. Mentoring and support for new staff</i>				
1. Mentors are trained for skills in active listening, leadership, conflict resolution, and providing feedback.				
2. We carefully select and match mentors.				
3. The mentoring system is evaluated and changed as needed.				
<i>F. Other orientation & training practices we use or would like to use (describe):</i>				

Selecting Orientation and Training Practices:

Look back at your scores for Orientation and Training practices. Items with scores of 1 or 2 are the ones to consider first for your Gold Star Plan. Mark these items (use a highlighter or other mark).

To help you choose at least one item to include in your Gold Star Plan, answer these questions for each item you have marked. The top priority should go to the item with the most “yes” responses.

Practice 1: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 2: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 3: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 4: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

We have selected the following Orientation and Training Practice to address in our Gold Star Plan:

(also include this on #2 page 27)

Staffing Levels and Work Hours

Staffing Levels and Work Hours Practices	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4
<i>A. Stable, reliable hours</i>				
1. We guarantee work hours and schedules.				
<i>B. Flexible scheduling</i>				
1. We provide opportunities for workers to create schedules that work best for them (e.g., split shifts).				
<i>C. Worker control over hours worked</i>				
1. We hold weekly meetings among unit staff to make assignments and hours for each staff member.				
<i>D. Overtime is not coercive, not pressured or frequently requested</i>				
1. We track overtime hours, looking at patterns to see if there are problem areas.				
2. We work to keep a low number of overtime hours				
3. Employees are not required to work overtime if they do not choose to do so.				
<i>E. Safe work loads</i>				
1. We figure out staffing levels needed to provide high quality of care.				
2. We carefully screen patients for admission and only accept patients when enough staff is in place to provide needed level of care.				
<i>Other staffing level & work hours practices we use or would like to use (describe):</i>				

Selecting Staffing Levels and Work Hours Practices:

Look back at your scores for Staffing Levels and Work Hours Practices. Items with scores of 1 or 2 are the ones to consider first for your Gold Star Plan. Mark these items (use a highlighter or other mark).

To help you choose at least one item to include in your Gold Star Plan, answer these questions for each item you have marked. The top priority should go to the item with the most “yes” responses.

Practice 1: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 2: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 3: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 4: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

We have selected the following Staffing Level and Work Hours Practice to address in our Gold Star Plan:

(also include this on #3 page 27)

Professional Development and Advancement Practices

Professional Development & Advancement Practices	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
<i>A. Career lattices</i>				
1. We raise wages and add responsibilities for staff through promotions within job categories (e.g., LNA I to LNAII).				
2. We have an LNAII program that includes training in mentoring, coaching and leadership skills.				
<i>B. Cross disciplinary training</i>				
1. We have training that helps staff build skills for different units, enabling workers to float across areas of our facility.				
<i>C. Mentoring programs</i>				
1. We have a mentor program that includes training for experienced staff to learn mentoring skills.				
2. We match trained mentors with newer employees.				
<i>D. Training in specialized care</i>				
1. We provide opportunities for staff to learn specialized care, such as the ACE Program to provide Alzheimer’s care, palliative care programs, or pain management programs.				
<i>E. Ongoing training opportunities on site or through financial support</i>				
1. Staff are encouraged and supported in obtaining additional training and education.				
2. We provide tuition assistance for college or technical school courses.				
<i>Other practices we use or would like to use (describe):</i>				

Selecting Professional Development & Advancement Practices:

Look back at your scores for Professional Development and Advancement Practices. Items with scores of 1 or 2 are the ones to consider first for your Gold Star Plan. Mark these items (use a highlighter or other mark).

To help you choose at least one item to include in your Gold Star Plan, answer these questions for each item you have marked. The top priority should go to the item with the most “yes” responses.

Practice 1: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 2: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 3: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 4: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

We have selected the following Professional Development & Advancement Practice to address in our Gold Star Plan:

(also include this on #4 page 27)

Supervision: Training and Practices

Supervision: Training & Practices	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
<i>A. Training for all supervisory staff</i>				
1. Supervisory staff receive training and feedback in all the following areas				
a. Communication skills (active listening & conflict resolution)				
b. Personnel management skills				
c. Scheduling				
2. We use a variety of ways to train current and potential supervisors, including onsite seminars and tuition to off site training programs.				
<i>B. Provide management staff with tools needed to succeed</i>				
1. We provide management staff with enough time to mentor and coach direct care workers.				
2. Administrators in our organization support management decisions.				
<i>C. Accessible management and supervisory staff</i>				
1. The administration and all managers and supervisors have an “open door” policy, meaning that the office door really remains open.				
2. Direct care staff can easily talk to program administrators and managers.				
<i>D. Demonstrate/model attitudes and behavior</i>				
1. Leaders of our nursing home have good communication skills and support development of those skills in others.				
2. Administrators use and support good coping skills.				
3. Managers demonstrate respect by knowing and using employees’ names.				
<i>E. Treat each worker as important to achieving agency mission</i>				
1. Employees understand that they are valuable and useful to the organization.				
<i>F. Specific, measurable job descriptions used to conduct performance reviews of supervisory staff</i>				
1. We evaluate supervisors’ skills by assessing them, reviewing records, and getting feedback from residents and families, their peers and direct caregivers.				
2. We look at the performance of supervisors by using measures of service quality and staff absenteeism and/or turnover rates.				
<i>G. Other practices supervision and training practices we use or would like to use (describe):</i>				

Selecting Supervision and Training Practices:

Look back at your scores for Supervision and Training Practices. Items with scores of 1 or 2 are the ones to consider first for your Gold Star Plan. Mark these items (use a highlighter or other mark).

To help you choose at least one item to include in your Gold Star Plan, answer these questions for each item you have marked. The top priority should go to the item with the most “yes” responses.

Practice 1: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 2: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 3: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 4: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

We have selected the following Supervision and Training Practice to address in our Gold Star Plan:

(also include this on #5 page 27)

Team Approach

Team Approach Practices	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4
<i>A. Direct care worker involved in patient care planning</i>				
1. Direct care staff is always part of care plan meetings.				
<i>B. Shared responsibility for patient care and outcomes</i>				
1. Job descriptions indicate that employees will help one another and work with a “one team” approach.				
2. Administrators spend time with direct support staff to better understand issues of residents and staff.				
3. Managers work with direct care staff on the floor to get the job done, as needed.				
<i>C. Permanent assignments to units or teams</i>				
1. Employees are permanently assigned to units or work teams.				
<i>D. Regular, mandatory team building activities</i>				
1. “Maintaining a positive working relationship with co-workers” is included in all job descriptions and is a clear expectation of all staff.				
2. We have a policy that spells out expected and acceptable staff behavior that includes a rule against gossip.				
3. We conduct regular events to help teams work together (e.g., decorate areas in each unit).				
<i>E. Regular meetings and communications to share information</i>				
1. We hold regular (daily or weekly) team meetings to share information and ideas.				
2. We have ways to make sure staff know about:				
a. Management and board decisions				
b. Opportunities for advancement				
c. Cost of benefits				
d. Quality improvement plans				
e. Progress on agency action plans				
f. Resident and employee satisfaction data				
<i>F. Staff involvement in problem solving and decision making</i>				
1. Direct support staff are part of every committee in our nursing home.				
2. We use teams to solve problems and create suggestions.				
<i>G. Other team approach practices we use or would like to use (describe):</i>				

Selecting Team Approach Practices:

Look back at your scores for Team Approach Practices. Items with scores of 1 or 2 are the ones to consider first for your Gold Star Plan. Mark these items (use a highlighter or other mark).

To help you choose at least one item to include in your Gold Star Plan, answer these questions for each item you have marked. The top priority should go to the item with the most “yes” responses.

Practice 1: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 2: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 3: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 4: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

We have selected the following Team Approach Practice to address in our Gold Star Plan:

(also include this on #6 page 27)

Staff Recognition and Support

Staff recognition and support practices	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4
<i>A. Strategies to express appreciation and respect</i>				
1. Staff often gets positive feedback from many different people. Feedback is immediate, earned, specific and personal.				
2. We have many ways to thank staff for excellent work (e.g., bonuses, plaques, certificates, gifts, etc.)				
3. We use a variety of ways to express appreciation for staff (e.g., staff appreciation events, birthday celebrations, brag boards).				
<i>B. Reward years of service</i>				
1. We have pay increases for length of employment.				
2. At specific times of employment (for example, 1, 2, 5, 10 years), we give staff members a gift or bonus.				
<i>C. "Personal Touch"</i>				
1. We use many different ways to recognize the individual in each staff member (e.g., name tags for all staff, mailboxes for all staff, staff board with photos)				
<i>D. Fun at Work initiatives</i>				
1. We have a committee to develop and organize events and activities for staff.				
2. We have specific traditions that add a touch of humor to our work days (e.g., costumes at Halloween).				
<i>E. Counseling resources</i>				
1. We have an employee assistance program to support staff in finding counseling services, self-help groups, childcare, financial counseling				
2. We provide general support in small groups or one-to-one.				
<i>F. Other practices (describe):</i>				

Selecting Staff Recognition and Support Practices:

Look back at your scores for Staff Recognition and Support Practices. Items with scores of 1 or 2 are the ones to consider first for your Gold Star Plan. Mark these items (use a highlighter or other mark).

To help you choose at least one item to include in your Gold Star Plan, answer these questions for each item you have marked. The top priority should go to the item with the most “yes” responses.

Practice 1: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 2: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 3: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

Practice 4: _____

Are we interested in using this practice?	Yes	No
Are there models of this practice easily available?	Yes	No
Is this a practice that would be easy to implement now?	Yes	No
Would we be able to implement this practice without too much cost?	Yes	No
Would use of this practice provide enough benefit to be worth the effort?	Yes	No

We have selected the following Recognition & Support Practice to address in our Gold Star Plan:

(also include this on #7 page 27)

Best Practice Selected for the Gold Star Plan

Use the following worksheet to help you select the *Best Practice* to pursue.

1. Staff Recruitment:

2. Orientation and Training:

3. Staffing Levels and Work Hours:

4. Professional Development and Advancement:

5. Supervision - Training and Practices:

6. Team Approach:

7. Staff Recognition:

Choose ONE of the above to submit a work plan.





Gold Star Plan

Introduction

The *Best Practice* Plan must be filled out and submitted to the Gold Star Council in order to be accepted into the Gold Star program. The *Best Practice* Plan consists of three forms:

- Goal Chart
- Work Planning Chart
- Challenges and Assistance Form

The Gold Star Team will *complete a set of planning forms for the Best Practice* that you've decided to develop. Once completed, the team should submit the plan to the Gold Star Council.

The completed plan should also serve as the roadmap to developing and implementing the new *Best Practice* you've chosen. It is set up to help your planning team become specific and realistic about the goals you want to achieve, the activities needed to reach your goals, the challenges you may face along the way, and the help you'll need to put the plan in place.

Instructions

1. Identify a new *Best Practice* or a substantial addition and continuation of a previous *Best Practice* that you will develop in this cycle.
2. Identify who in your nursing home needs to be involved in developing and implementing the *Best Practice*.
3. Bring together a planning team and have them become familiar with the charts and form (they can do this as a group or individually).
4. The team first completes the **Goal Chart**. Instructions are at the top of each column. Make additional copies of charts and form as needed.
5. Next, the team fills out the **Work Planning Chart**. Begin by deciding what steps you will need to achieve your goals. Be as specific as possible. The more detailed and thoughtful you are at this stage, the easier it will be for you to complete this work and implement your chosen *Best Practice*.
6. Identify whom in your nursing home should be involved in each step – and designate the one person (with an *) who will be responsible for making sure that step happens.
7. List the ways in which you will demonstrate that each step was accomplished.
8. Identify a completion date for each step.

9. Fill out the **Challenges and Needed Assistance Form**. The team should discuss challenges they may face in developing the *Best Practice*. This is an opportunity for people to voice their concerns and think as a group about how to address the challenges. The team can then identify “outside” assistance they believe is needed to achieve the goals of this plan. Do they need training that is specific to the goals? Would they like to see examples of the work that other nursing homes have successfully implemented? Would they like the names and contact information for staff in other nursing homes who have worked on this goal? The Gold Star Council will make every effort to assist nursing homes in the Gold Star Program to receive the help they need to be successful in their efforts.
10. In order to document *Best Practices* that are currently in place, nursing homes should **submit a copy of their self-assessment** with their applications
11. Finally, complete the **Gold Star Application Cover Sheet** and attach it to the front of the Planning Application.

Planning Examples

To help you develop a plan, the Gold Star Council has created examples of plans for several of the *Best Practice* categories. These are in Appendix I. However, each nursing home is strongly encouraged to develop steps that work best for the facility. There is no expectation that your plan should look just like any of these examples.

Goal Chart

Best Practice area _____

Best Practice _____

Goals <i>Instructions – List each goal separately that your nursing home expects to achieve as a result of implementing this practice.</i>	How will you demonstrate that you met your goals? <i>Instructions – describe how your nursing home will demonstrate that it was successful in meeting each goal (provide a separate description for each goal)</i>

Work Planning Chart

<p>Steps needed to establish the following <i>Best Practice</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>List each step or activity that the team has identified as needed. Be as specific and concrete as possible.</i></p>	<p><i>Identify all those who will be involved in each step. Identify one person who will be responsible for making this happen with an *</i></p>	<p><i>Specify how you will demonstrate that each step was accomplished.</i></p>	<p><i>Identify a realistic completion date for each step.</i></p>

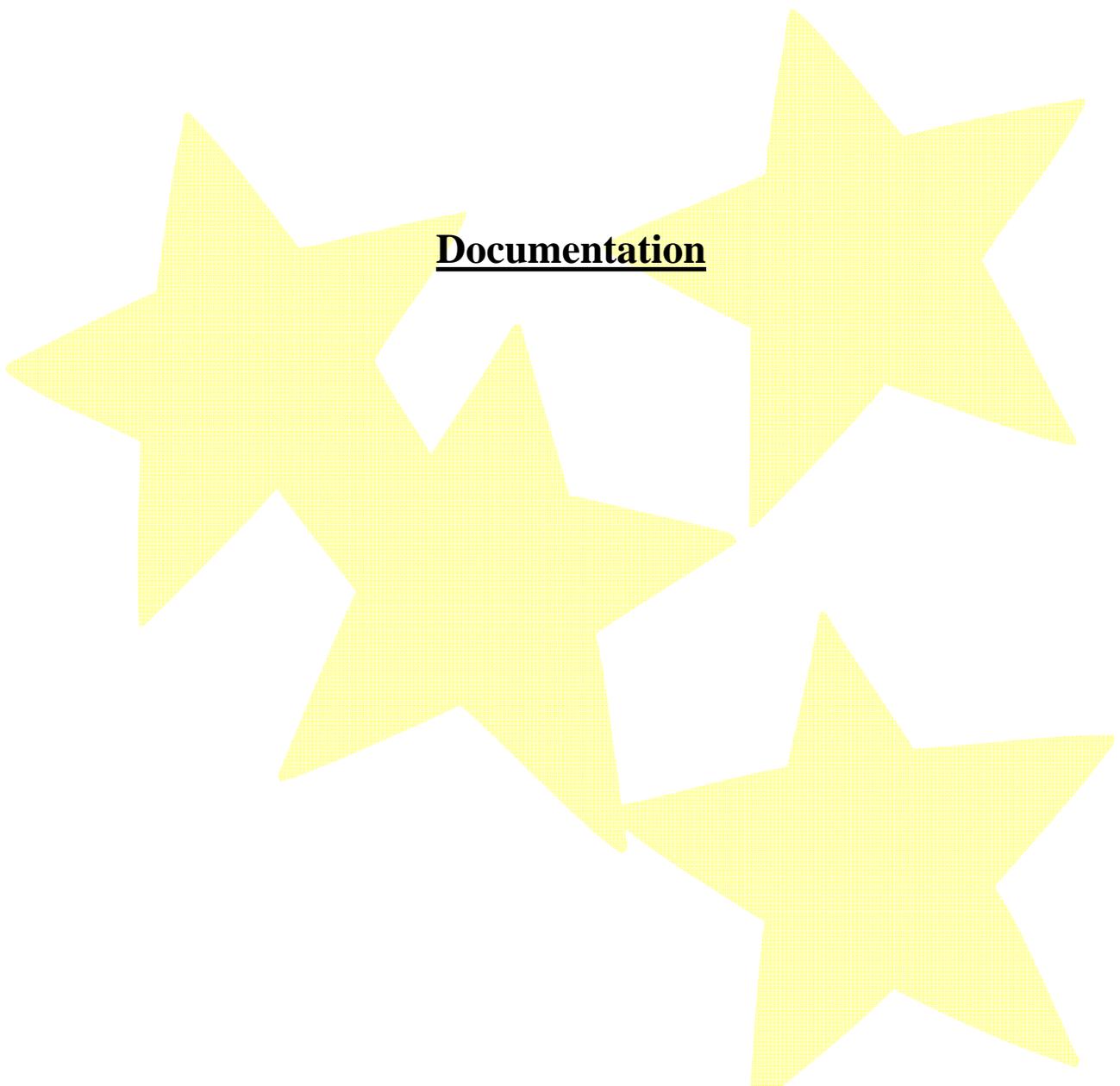
**Challenges and Assistance Form
To Successfully Achieve our Goals**

Instructions: Please be as open and thoughtful as possible in answering the following three questions. The purpose of this section is to give you the opportunity to identify and plan for challenges to your work plan, and to identify any outside support or training you may need to implement your plan and reach your goals.

Describe the challenges or barriers you might face in implementing this practice.

Describe your plans for addressing the challenges described above.

What external assistance is needed for your nursing home to implement this practice (e.g., training, technical assistance, resources, other)?



Documentation

Instructions

The Gold Star Council has identified two types of documentation that participating nursing homes are asked to provide. These are:

- Documentation of the steps taken and achievement of goals outlined in the Gold Star plan.
- Facility data to be used for tracking system-wide outcomes

This documentation must be submitted to the Gold Star Council no later than March 1.

Documentation of work plan implementation - Throughout the year, you will document the implementation of steps and the achievement of goals. At the end of the Gold Star cycle, you will present this documentation to the Council for its review.

To present evidence of your documentation, use the following forms. These forms help you to outline your original plans and the degree to which those plans were realized. Additionally, they allow you to demonstrate how your current work and accomplishments will impact plans to develop new *Best Practices* for the coming year. Please feel free to add any additional documents you feel would help explain your work and progress.

System-wide outcome information – The implementation of *Best Practices* in Vermont’s nursing homes is expected, over time, to have a positive impact on the work culture within individual facilities and throughout Vermont’s nursing home profession. These outcomes are documented in research and the experiences of nursing homes already adopting *Best Practices*. The Gold Star Council would like to track the impact of instituting *Best Practices* on the following outcomes:

1. Employee satisfaction
2. Turnover rates
3. Staff position vacancy rates
4. Years of service

In order to do this, nursing homes will track these outcomes using standardized formula. The data reported to the Council will be kept strictly confidential. The Council will use the information in aggregate to track system-wide outcomes.

Note that employee satisfaction is the one outcome without a specific formula. It is expected that each nursing home will track employee satisfaction through the use of employee satisfaction assessments conducted by outside, independent assessors. If your nursing home is not able to conduct an independent employee satisfaction assessment, please be in touch with the Gold Star Council to request assistance.

Documentation Checklist

Complete the following forms and submit for consideration for Gold Star designation.

- Documentation Cover Sheet (page 37)
- Goal Chart Documentation (page 38)
- Work Planning chart documentation (page 39)
- Challenges & Assistance documentation (page 40)
- System wide outcomes tracking forms (pages 41-44)
employee satisfaction, vacancy rate,
turnover rate & years of service

Documentation Cover Sheet

Use the following cover sheet when submitting documentation to the Gold Star Council.

Name of Nursing Home: _____

of Beds in facility: _____ Total # of employees: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

Best Practice we implemented:

Summary of changes that were made in the original Gold Star Plan (if any):

Summary of our accomplishments in this Gold Star cycle:

Summary of challenges we faced in this cycle:

Description of how current work and accomplishments will impact plans for developing new *Best Practice* in the coming year.

Goal Chart - Documentation

Best Practice area:

Best Practice:

<p><u>Goals :</u></p> <p><i>Instructions: In the column below, list all the goals your nursing home expected to achieve as a result of implementing this practice.</i></p>	<p>How did you demonstrate that you've met your goals?</p> <p><i>Instructions: In the column below, provide a description for each goal of how your nursing home planned to demonstrate that it was successful in implementing each goal.</i></p>	<p>Goals Achieved</p> <p><i>In this column document for each goal, if it was achieved. Also document any unanticipated outcomes that resulted from this plan.</i></p>

Work Planning Chart - Documentation

Steps identified	Steps actually taken	Identify persons who were involved in making this happen. Identify the one person who assumed responsibility with *.	Persons actually involved	How did you expect to demonstrate that this step was accomplished?	How did you demonstrate this was accomplished	Completion date for each step	Actual completion date

Challenges and Assistance - Documentation

Please answer the following questions:

Describe the actual challenges or barriers you faced in implementing this practice. Which of these were anticipated when you developed your plan? Which, if any, were unexpected?

Describe how you addressed the challenges you faced.

What external assistance did you actually access and use to implement this practice (e.g., training, technical assistance, resources, other)? Who provided this assistance? How satisfied were you with the assistance?

System-wide Outcomes Tracking Form

Employee Satisfaction:

1. Source of employee satisfaction information:
Independent assessment (name: _____)

2. Have there been changes in overall employee satisfaction over the course of the Gold Star cycle? Describe.

3. Describe changes in levels of employee satisfaction for each of the seven *Best Practice* areas:
 - a. Staff recruitment

 - b. Orientation and training

 - c. Staffing levels and work hours

 - d. Professional development and advancement

 - e. Supervision: Training and practices

 - f. Team approaches

 - g. Staff recognition and support

Turnover Rate

1. Calculate the average number of employees on payroll in the one year period, March 1 to February 28:

Month	Number of terminations (employees leaving job) during month	Number of persons on payroll during month
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
Total number of employees that left in year (A)		
Total number of employees on payroll		
Total number of employees on payroll divided by 12 = Average number of employees over 1 year (B)		

2. Calculate Turnover Rate:

A. Total number of employees that left in one year (March 1 thru Feb 28)	B. Average number of employees on payroll in same one year period	$(A / B) \times 100$	Turnover Rate

Vacancy Rate

Using your own definition of FTE (full time equivalent), calculate vacancy on the date specified. Note that you are calculating staff position vacancies, not missing people for that given date.

Please check one: _____ nursing staff only _____ all employees

1st Gold Star Cycle Quarter			
A. Total number of vacant FTE's on April 30	B. Total number of filled FTE's on April 30	$\frac{A}{A + B} \times 100$	1 st Quarter Vacancy Rate

2nd Gold Star Cycle Quarter			
A. Total number of vacant FTE's on July 31	B. Total number of filled FTE's on July 31	$\frac{A}{A + B} \times 100$	2 nd Quarter Vacancy Rate

3rd Gold Star Cycle Quarter			
A. Total number of vacant FTE's on October 31	B. Total number of filled FTE's on October 31	$\frac{A}{A + B} \times 100$	3rd Quarter Vacancy Rate

4th Gold Star Cycle Quarter			
A. Total number of vacant FTE's on January 31	B. Total number of filled FTE's on January 31	$\frac{A}{A + B} \times 100$	4 th Quarter Vacancy Rate

Years of Service

As of December 31, calculate the rates for 1, 5, 10, and 20 years of service as follows:

A. Total number of employees with ONE-FOUR years of service as of December 31	B. Total number of employees as of December 31	$\frac{A}{B} \times 100$	One-Four Years of Service Rate

A. Total number of employees with FIVE-NINE years of service as of December 31	B. Total number of employees as of December 31	$\frac{A}{B} \times 100$	Five-Nine Years of Service Rate

A. Total number of employees with TEN-NINETEEN years of service as of December 31	B. Total number of employees as of December 31	$\frac{A}{B} \times 100$	Ten-Nineteen Years of Service Rate

A. Total number of employees with TWENTY OR MORE years of service as of December 31	B. Total number of employees as of December 31	$\frac{A}{B} \times 100$	Twenty Years of Service Rate

2. Calculate the number of staff who left employment prior to 3 and 6 months of service in the past year.

A. Total number of employees that left with less than 3 months of service	B. Total number of employees as of December 31	$\frac{A}{B} \times 100$	Less than 3 months of service rate

A. Total number of employees that left with 3 to 6 months of service	B. Total number of employees as of December 31	$\frac{A}{B} \times 100$	3 to 6 months of service rate

Contact Information

If you need help with the Gold Star Employer application, or if you would like more information, please contact:

Mary Shriver, Executive Director, Vermont Health Care Association
(802) 229-5700
mshriver@vhca.net

Laine Lucenti, Director, Licensing & Protection, Department of Aging and Independent Living
(802) 241-2346
laine@dail.state.vt.us

Appendices

Appendix I

Examples of Best Practice Work Plans

Goal Chart (example)

Best Practice area: Professional Development and Advancement

Best Practice: Staff are encouraged and supported in obtaining additional training and education

<p>Goals : <i>Instructions: in the column below, list all the goals your Nursing Home expects to achieve as a result of implementing this practice.</i></p>	<p>How will you demonstrate that you've implemented your goals? <i>Instructions: in the column below, provide a separate description <u>for each goal</u> of how your Nursing Home will demonstrate that it was successful in implementing each goal.</i></p>
<p>Staff are encouraged and supported in obtaining additional training and education</p>	<p>The number of staff who are participating in educational programs will increase from one in 2004 to 3 or more in 2005.</p>

Work Planning Chart (example)

<p>Steps needed to establish the following Best Practice: Staff are encouraged and supported in obtaining additional training and education. <i>List each step or activity that the team has identified as needed. Be as specific and concrete as possible.</i></p>	<p><i>Identify all those who will be involved in each step. Identify the one person who will assume responsibility with *</i></p>	<p><i>Specify how will you demonstrate that each step was accomplished.</i></p>	<p><i>Identify a realistic completion date for each step.</i></p>
<p>#1 – Information regarding LPN and RN programs will be available on a special bulletin board in the staff lounge.</p>	<p>Secretary and maintenance personal will purchase and install new bulletin board. DON* will post and update educational materials and financial aid information.</p>	<p>Education Bulletin board in place</p>	<p>5/30/04</p>
<p>#2 – Scholarship fund is established for employees with “memorial” funds.</p>	<p>Administrator* establishes and announces a scholarship fund and actively solicits “memorial” donations.</p>	<p>Scholarship account opened and funding to support 4 one course for 4 students is available</p>	<p>8/15/04</p>
<p>#3”Back to School” celebration and gifts for all enrolled employees</p>	<p>Activities director* and resident council</p>	<p>“Back to School” party is photographed and written up in Newsletter.</p>	<p>9/1/04</p>
<p>#4 Student nurses from VTC will have clinical rotation here</p>	<p>DON* and administrator</p>	<p>A student nurse clinical rotation will be established for the fall and/or semester</p>	<p>12/04</p>

Challenges and Assistance Needed to Successfully Achieve our Goals (example)

Instructions: Please be as open and thoughtful as possible in answering the following three questions. The purpose of this section is to give your Nursing Home the opportunity to identify and plan for obstacles to your work plan, and to identify what outside support you may need to implement your plan and reach your goals.

Describe the challenges or barriers you might face in implementing this practice.

- 2) Inadequate funds for “memorial” donations to support the number of scholarships requested.
- 4) Lack of interest in geriatric nursing from nursing school faculty.

Describe your plans for addressing the challenges you’ve described above.

- 2) Research other scholarship options for our employees
- 4) Develop relationship with nursing school faculty through alumni connections

What external assistance is needed for your Nursing Home to implement this practice (e.g., training, technical assistance, resources, other)?

We would like examples of successful implementation of similar programs in other LTC facilities.

Goal Chart (example)

Best Practice area – [Team Approach Practices](#)

Best Practice – [Regular, mandatory team building activities](#)

<p>Goals <i>Instructions – Below list each goal separately that your nursing home expects to achieve as a result of implementing this practice.</i></p>	<p>How will you demonstrate that you met your goals? <i>Instructions – describe how your nursing home will demonstrate that it was successful in meeting each goal (provide a separate description for each goal)</i></p>
<p>Maintaining positive working relationships with co-workers will be included in revised, rewritten job descriptions</p>	<p>There will be less negativity between employers.</p>
<p>A Team-Building and Morale Committee made up exclusively of line staff and direct care employees will be in place – no department heads or administrative staff will participate.</p>	<p>Increase in staff morale Reduction in staff turnover</p>

Work Planning Chart (example)

<p>Steps needed to establish the following Best Practice Regular, mandatory team building activities <i>List each step or activity that the team has identified as needed. Be as specific and concrete as possible.</i></p>	<p><i>Identify all those who will be involved in each step. Identify one person who will be responsible for making this happen with an *</i></p>	<p><i>Specify how you will demonstrate that each step was accomplished.</i></p>	<p><i>Identify a realistic completion date for each step.</i></p>
<p>Team building committee will be formed.</p>	<p>Administrator*</p>	<p>Meeting minutes</p>	<p>7-1-04</p>
<p>Add “maintaining positive working relationships” to job description re-writes</p>	<p>Administrator*</p>	<p>New job description will contain this statement</p>	<p>8-1-04</p>
<p>Team will elect a chair and will develop ideas, plans and timelines for accomplishments.</p>	<p>Team made up of direct care worker and line staff from each dept, Elected chair*</p>	<p>Meeting minutes</p>	<p>8-1-04</p>
<p>Team will implement plans</p>	<p>Team made up of direct care worker and line staff from each dept., Chair*</p>	<p>Activities identified in plan were completed.</p>	<p>9-1-04 and ongoing</p>

Challenges and Assistance Needed to Successfully Achieve our Goals (example)

Instructions: Please be as open and thoughtful as possible in answering the following three questions. The purpose of this section is to give you the opportunity to identify and plan for challenges to your work plan, and to identify any outside support or training you may need to implement your plan and reach your goals.

Describe the challenges or barriers you might face in implementing this practice.

Existing negativity within staff.

Getting employees to “buy-in”

Describe your plans for addressing the challenges described above.

Support of administrator and Board.

Make it “fun”

What external assistance is needed for your nursing home to implement this practice (e.g., training, technical assistance, resources, other)?

Board support.

Goal Chart (example)

Best Practice Category - [Staff Recruitment](#)

Best Practice - [Honest Description of Job Duties and Expectations](#)

Goals <i>Instructions – Below list each goal separately that your nursing home expects to achieve as a result of implementing this practice.</i>	How will you demonstrate that you met your goals? <i>Instructions – describe how your nursing home will demonstrate that it was successful in meeting each goal (provide a separate description for each goal)</i>
All employee job descriptions are clear and accurate and clearly state job expectations.	New employees will need less orientation to jobs, and there will be less questions on duties
New employee orientation policies will address stresses of job, will review job descriptions, and provide time with fellow employees for question and answer sessions.	Reduction in turnover of employees on the job for 3 months or less.

Work Planning Chart (example)

<p>Steps needed to establish the following Best Practice: <i>Honest Description of Job Duties and Expectations</i> List each step or activity that the team has identified as needed. Be as specific and concrete as possible.</p>	<p><i>Identify all those who will be involved in each step. Identify one person who will be responsible for making this happen with an *</i></p>	<p><i>Specify how you will demonstrate that each step was accomplished.</i></p>	<p><i>Identify a realistic completion date for each step.</i></p>
<p>New orientation policy committee is formed and made up of dept. heads and direct care staff.</p>	<p>Administrator* and dept. heads</p>	<p>New written policies</p>	<p>6-15-04</p>
<p>Orientation program is developed (including stresses of job, job descriptions, time with fellow employees for question and answer sessions)</p>	<p>Orientation Policy Committee, including Administrator*</p>	<p>Orientation program curriculum</p>	<p>12-15-04</p>
<p>All new employees are oriented to new policies.</p>	<p>Administrator* and dept. heads</p>	<p>New procedures are in effect.</p>	<p>Beginning 1-1-05</p>
<p>Each dept. head and one direct care worker review job descriptions for clarity and accuracy.</p>	<p>Individual dept. heads*</p>	<p>Job descriptions with suggested changes are submitted to administrator.</p>	<p>7-1-04</p>
<p>Modified job descriptions go to the Board for approval.</p>	<p>Administrator* and dept. heads</p>	<p>Board approval and minutes.</p>	<p>8-1-04</p>
<p>New Job descriptions and training are put in place for all staff.</p>	<p>Dept. heads*</p>	<p>Signature page signed by all employees.</p>	<p>9-1-04</p>

Challenges and Assistance Needed to Successfully Achieve our Goals (example)

Instructions: Please be as open and thoughtful as possible in answering the following three questions. The purpose of this section is to give you the opportunity to identify and plan for challenges to your work plan, and to identify any outside support or training you may need to implement your plan and reach your goals.

Describe the challenges or barriers you might face in implementing this practice.

Department heads and staff may feel that they don't have enough time to work on this.

Resistance to change.

Describe your plans for addressing the challenges described above.

Set aside time for meetings.

Offer overtime compensation to direct care staff for their participation.

What external assistance is needed for your nursing home to implement this practice (e.g., training, technical assistance, resources, other)?

Cooperation of Board of Trustees.

Would like to see examples of orientation manuals or curricula from other nursing homes.

Appendix II

Application Review Process

Gold Star Application Review Process

Overview:

The Gold Star Council is responsible for application and documentation review leading to the designation of nursing homes as Gold Star facilities. Each application will first be assessed by a Review Team.

Review Teams, chaired by a member of the Council, are drawn from a pool of reviewers who have a broad range of expertise relating to work force recruitment and retention and represent all regions of the state. Review team members will not include current nursing home personnel, but will include people with knowledge of long term care, human resources and employee relations. In assigning applications to Review Teams, the Council will take into account conditions such as geographic location of nursing homes in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

The Review Team's decision making process will be guided by the use of a standardized scoring instrument. The purpose of this instrument is to insure that all applications are judged and scored by the same criteria.

The scoring instrument will guide the Review Team in making one of three possible recommendations to the full council on a nursing home's application:

- Accepted as is
- Accepted with clarifications
- Application not complete

All nursing homes expressing interest in the Gold Star Employer program will be given the opportunity to complete acceptable applications. Nursing homes will have 30 days to respond to requests for clarification or further information. If nursing homes require further time to respond, they will be encouraged to apply in the next Gold Star cycle.

The Council considers the Review Team recommendations for all applications and makes final decisions. The Council members who chaired each team will be present in these discussions and participate in the final decisions. It is also at this point that the Council will identify technical assistance needs and request assistance to meet those needs, including assistance to complete acceptable applications, from appropriate agencies (e.g., DAIL, VHCA, Office of Nursing Workforce).

Review Process – Use of Application Criteria Score Sheet

The purpose of ranking/scoring each application on a set of specific criteria is to provide consistency and a level of objectivity for every applicant that comes to the Gold Star Council. It is important that applicants, Council and Review Team members have a common understanding of what is being judged and how it is being judged on the application plans. Given that the review process will involve different teams, these criteria and decision making guidelines are intended to insure as much fairness and equity in the decision making process as possible.

Scores are totaled for each Best Practice separately; the application receives TWO scores (one for each Best Practice). This means that one Best Practice may be “accepted” while another “requires clarification.” The following instructions outline the process Review Teams use.

Each Review Team member adds up the scores on his/her ranking sheet to get a “total score” at the bottom of the sample ranking form on page 3.

The Review Team, as a whole, compares their rankings and comments. The object of this activity is for the Review Team to arrive at a consensus score. The team may choose to do this through discussion – in the event that consensus can’t be reached on each score, the team may decide to use the mean score for individual criteria when discussion doesn’t achieve consensus.

The Review Team uses the score ranges below for their final recommendation to the Gold Star Council. Therefore, if an application’s total score falls between:

<i>0 – 12</i>	the application on that Best Practice is <i>Not Complete</i>
<i>13-28</i>	the application that Best Practice <i>Requires Clarification</i>
<i>29-40</i>	the application on that Best Practice is <i>Accepted</i>.

For applications receiving scores under 29, the Review Team clearly articulates, in writing, the clarifications the applicant should make.

The Review Team presents its recommendations on each application to the Gold Star Council.

The Gold Star Council reviews the recommendations. The Council informs nursing homes if their applications were accepted (scores from 29-40), requiring clarification (scores 13-28) or need completion (scores 0 -12). Nursing homes with accepted applications can begin implementation of their plan upon receiving notification.

For applications with scores of 13-28 (accepted with clarifications), the Gold Star Council will notify the applicant of the decision and requested revisions. The applicant will be given up to 30 days from receipt of the decision to address the requests and return them to the Council for final acceptance. These nursing homes will be offered technical assistance to help with requested clarifications.

Nursing homes with applications scoring 0 – 12 (incomplete), will receive a clear outline from the Council on areas of the application requiring further details. These nursing homes will be encouraged to re-apply in the next Gold Star Cycle if a 30 day response is unrealistic. They will also be offered technical assistance to aid in the completion of their applications.

In cases where the Council disagrees with the Review Team recommendations, the Council can re-assess the criteria, re-score and revise the Review Team decision.

**SAMPLE FOR APPLICANT'S INFORMATION ONLY:
DO NOT INCLUDE IN GOLD STAR APPLICATION**

**Gold Star Council
Best Practice Review Team
Application Criteria Score Sheet**

Instructions:

1) *Each member of the Review Team should read the application and evaluate each component of the plan listed below with a score from 0 to 2 where:*

- 0 = Not complete*
- 1 = Accepted with clarifications*
- 2 = Accepted*

2) *Use the comments section to note concerns, explain scores, etc.*

3) *At the end of this form, add up all the scores recorded in the right column to calculate the total score.*

Best Practice area: _____

Best Practice: _____

	<i>Not complete</i>	<i>Accepted w/clarifications</i>	<i>Accepted</i>
1) GOALS			
a) The goals of this plan are:			
Clearly described	0	1	2
b) Methods for demonstrating goals were met are:			
Clearly described	0	1	2
Specific as to expected result	0	1	2
Based on results that are Observable or measurable	0	1	2
Totals	_____	_____	_____ = _____

Comment _____

