Dear Skilled Nursing Administrator:

As an administrator of a long term care facility, we know you are always looking for ways to improve the lives of your residents and assure adherence to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid guidelines, including new regulatory requirements effective November 28, 2017. The University of Maryland School of Nursing and the Penn State College of Nursing invite you to participate in a year-long research project that will help teach your staff how to prevent and manage behavioral problems among your residents while using a wide array of nonpharmacologic approaches, such as optimizing function and physical activity. We do this by helping staff integrate optimal care activities into the everyday lives of your residents.

All sites will be provided with education by our research team that focuses on helping staff members manage challenging behaviors using evidence based nonpharmacologic approaches during routine care activities. Half of the sites will also be asked to identify a small stakeholder team from your facility that includes a champion. This champion will work with a Research Facilitator over the course of one year to continue to implement innovative care approaches regarding behavioral symptoms into your setting as routine care.

Our research staff will recruit approximately 12 residents from your setting to evaluate the impact of the implementation approach. All recruitment activities and data collection will be done by the research staff. Since this is a research project and not proven that the research participation will improve the lives of the residents, all of the resources associated with the study will be at no cost to you and the residents.

Given the current regulatory guidance we anticipate being able to help you with adherence to the following F Tags:

* **Activities of Daily Living**. Provide necessary care and services to ensure that a resident’s abilities in ADL’s are sustained at the highest level possible [F676 §483.24(a)]
* **Activities**. Provide comprehensive assessments and on-going activities that meet each resident’s physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. [F679 §483.24(c)(1)]
* **Accidents**. Ensure that resident’s environment remains as free of accident hazards as possible; and residents receive adequate supervision and assistive devices to prevent accidents. [F689 §483.25(d)(1)(2)]
* **Incontinence.** Residents continent of bladder and bowel on admission receive services and assistance to maintain continence [F690 §483.25(e)(1)-(3)]
* **Nursing Services.** Maintain sufficient nursing staff with the appropriate competencies and skills sets to provide nursing and related services to assure resident safety and attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident [F726 §483.35 (a)(3)(4)(c); F741 §483.40 (a)(1)(2)]
* **Behavioral health services.** Ensure residents receive the necessary behavioral health care and services to attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being, in accordance with their comprehensive assessment and plan of care.

[F740 §483.40]

* **Staff Training Requirements.** Develop, implement, and maintain an effective training program, including dementia management and resident abuse prevention for all new and existing staff; individuals providing services under a contractual arrangement; and volunteers, consistent with their expected roles. [F940 §483.95; F941 §483.95(a); F942 §483.95(b); F949 §483.95(1)]
* **Free from Unnecessary Psychotropic Drug Use.** Ensure that residents who have not used psychotropic drugs are not given these drugs unless necessary to treat a specific condition diagnosed and documented in the clinical record, and those using psychotropic drugs receive gradual dose reductions and behavioral interventions.

[F758 §483.45(c)(3)(e)(1)-(5)]

Please contact [Maryland: Jeanette Ellis; email: jeanette.ellis@umaryland.edu; Tel: 410-706-6811; Northeastern PA: Liza Behrens; email: LLB237@psu.edu; Tel: 570-262-7048; Southeastern PA: Karen Eshraghi, email: kje25@psu.edu; Tel: 215-371-3440] if you are interested in obtaining more information and/or participating in the project. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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Kimberly Van Haitsma, PhD

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