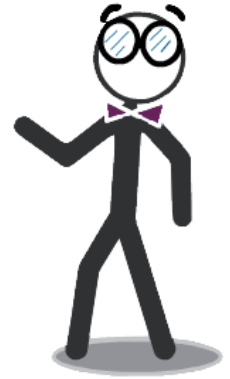


## CASE STUDY



*“We are very proud of the progress we have made, and Upstairs Solutions was absolutely the key to our success.”*

– Cathy Woods  
ABS Administrator



## ABS BENEFITS

- Restraint QI/QM drop from 7.3% to 2.7%
- A more proactive approach to falls management
- Able to show resistant family members new changes based on best practices
- Restraint-free with fall QIs lower than the industry average



## ABS Long Term Care

■ **CHALLENGE** Falls by older adults in nursing homes are a significant problem for residents and providers alike. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that up to 75% percent of residents fall annually, with serious impacts on quality of life and healthcare delivery costs. Counter-intuitively, the use of physical restraints in nursing homes has been shown to be a major contributing factor in many falls.

When ABS Management, a long term care provider with seven skilled facilities in southern Illinois, took on the challenge of creating restraint free environments for their residents in 2005, they turned to Upstairs Solutions for help. “We were committed to implementing best care practices for our residents and improving our survey results,” said Cheryl Dillon, RNC, BSN, LNHA, ABS’ Director of Quality Assurance, “and we knew that outstanding training would be critical to our success.”

■ **SOLUTION** ABS used three online training modules from Upstairs Solutions’ library to introduce its staff to the fundamentals of restraint usage and reduction: What are Physical Restraints, Creating a Restraint-Free Environment, and Siderails – a Hidden Danger. The courses utilize

rich multimedia and interactive case studies to help specific audiences in the nursing facility understand the types of restraints and the risks of injury associated with them. They further demonstrate safe alternatives to restraints and describe interdisciplinary approaches to reducing restraint usage.

Many employees were initially skeptical that restraint removal could reduce resident injuries. However, company-wide training made the entire staff – from nurses to maintenance men – more sensitive to the negative effects of restraints, and enabled them to think outside of the box and design modifications in their approach to care that could minimize the need for restraints.

While the staff was enthusiastically transforming their processes, ABS was surprised to encounter strong resistance from family members. “There was a real concern that if that siderails (in particular) weren’t in place, the risk for falls and serious injuries would skyrocket,” noted Cathy Woods, RN, LNHA, an ABS Administrator. To address the fear that side rail removal would increase the danger to their loved ones, ABS admissions directors invited family members to view the Upstairs Solutions

modules. This experience usually led to their acceptance and support of the initiative. “Having the modules available anytime, anywhere helped us when a family member would push back on a restraint reduction program with their loved one. We were able to show resistant family members how our new changes were based on best practices and would help their loved ones,” Woods concluded.

■ **RESULTS** After a year of training and modified approaches, ABS was reaping its rewards. The company saw its restraint QI/QM drop from 7.3% to 2.7% and was fast approaching its goal of being restraint-free. But while they were celebrating their success with restraint reduction, some other measures were cause for concern. Falls in the facilities went from 13.4%, about the state average, to an alarming 22%! Perhaps the initial fears were justified, and the restraint-reduction program had done more harm than good?

The quality assurance committees in the ABS facilities met to investigate the root cause for the increase, and noticed that most of the falls were occurring within the first 36 hours of residents’ stays. The facilities determined that they needed to take a more proactive approach to falls management and initiate their falls inventions at the time of admission, including a more rigorous assessment, with family and interdisciplinary staff involvement. Upstairs Solutions online training – for employees and families – was now the obvious choice to make it happen!

The Understanding Falls (for staff) and Is Your Loved One at Risk for Falls? (for families) modules covered the principles of why falls occur and the best practices/interdisciplinary approach to preventing falls. Armed with their new knowledge, the focus at ABS became the role that staff and family play in fall prevention. After training their entire staff with the Upstairs Solutions modules, ABS reduced their fall QI/QM to a number lower than it had been when they used restraints. By 2009, with help from Upstairs Solutions, ABS was restraint-free with fall QIs lower than the industry average.

According to Woods, “We are very proud of the progress we have made, and Upstairs Solutions was absolutely the key to our success. The quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of their program is much greater than we could have replicated using traditional training methods, and it is an extraordinary value.”



*ABS Long Term Care is a long-term care management company serving the geriatric populations in the Southern Illinois and Chicago area. ABS Management is a family owned/operated corporation that has been involved in long-term care for over 25 years.*