

TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR RESPONSE RATE

We want every nursing home and residential care facility to get enough responses to the Family Satisfaction Survey to be eligible for public reporting on www.ltc.ohio.gov. But that's not always easy. Some facilities get surveys from more than 75% of their families--how do they do it? Scripps Gerontology Center asked a dozen of these high-response nursing homes and residential care facilities to tell us. Big facilities, small ones, urban and rural. They all had some of the highest response rates in the state even though their families weren't the most or least satisfied.

First, many of these organizations build relationships with families from the day the resident arrives. They have lots of communication, keep families engaged, get them participating in the very first care plan and being part of resident goal setting. So, when they get their family survey, these families know that the facility cares about their input.

Next, they don't rely on those strong relationships, so don't worry if you didn't start at day one. They communicate with the families about the survey. So **right now**, tell them you want to hear from them when the time comes in your newsletter or other regular communications.

The message:

- The survey is important to help us improve. We can't fix something if we don't know it's broken.
- The survey is important to let other families know about how this nursing home is doing—they can see what the residents had to say at www.ltc.ohio.gov.
- The survey will be coming at a particular time--find the date at <http://aging.ohio.gov/ombudsman/familysurvey>

The method:

- Send this messaging in a first-class letter. This gives you the opportunity to correct addresses. Call those families for whom your letter is returned. Ask others to notify you if their letter was forwarded to a new address. Bulk mail surveys will not be forwarded and you'll lose those responses. Make sure the family list you send to Scripps is correct;
- Include the information in a notice with the billing during the month of your survey, and put the information in the newsletter again;
- Put the week your surveys will be mailed on your calendar right now, and schedule some time to make phone calls that week or the week after. Divide the list of all the families among the leadership team. Call each family encouraging them to complete the survey. Hearing from the top team in person tells the families their input matters;
- Put up a display sign right in front of the entrance. "Did you complete and return your family satisfaction survey? [Facility name] wants to know what you think;"
- Put flyers on the bulletin boards around the facility;
- Include information about the survey helpline: familysurvey@miamioh.edu or 1-844-864-0049 so they can ask for a replacement survey if they lost or misplaced theirs;
- When you see families in the facility, ask them if they completed their surveys.

Facilities with high response rates didn't just do one of these suggestions—they wrote, called, and reminded in several different ways. And they got some of the highest response rates in the state. They let families know their input matters and they prove it by making an extra effort to encourage, ask, and remind them to provide it.

*These families want your **EAR**:*

Encourage them to complete the survey, Ask if they've done it, and Remind them their input is important.