Assessment of nursing competency is essential for maintaining quality long term nursing care. 50% of infections cause patient transfer to hospitals from an Assisted Living facility. Close to 79% of hospital readmissions are avoidable. For example, up to 24% of all occurrences of pressure ulcers in post-acute care can be prevented. These statistics clearly show that competently administered care provided by demonstrably trained health professionals is a value that no Assisted Living facility can do without. Here are 5 sound reasons as to how pre-employment screening, based on clinical competency, can improve health care quality in a post-acute care facility:

1. Smarter hiring decisions

Verify that employees have baseline clinical and core competency knowledge. While most health care workers need to undergo educational programs involving testing to be eligible to work in a health related profession that does not mean they remember relevant procedures or that they’re familiar with the most effective methods currently available. When such individuals are hired with knowledge deficiencies undetected, they can become a detriment to an organization and jeopardize patient care. Testing will identify these issues and gaps, which can be resolved through additional training.

2. Market differentiation

Illustrate demonstrable quality to clients. While everyone assures others that they hire quality staff, those making use of competency screening can actually prove that they hire the most qualified candidates. Assisted Living facilities can advertise to current and potential residents that all staff must pass nationally validated competency exams. High quality staff means high quality service, a value that is obviously significant and demonstrable. Marketing an Assisted Living facility as having measurable and superior quality shows excellence in the facility’s primary function.

3. Improved Resident Experience

Employing Nurse Competency exams is an effective mechanism in testing staff’s understanding of age-related care, therapeutic communication and knowledge of diseases. These all lead to an improved resident experience. With over 115 different exams and nurses’ competency tests to choose from, most relevant areas are covered. A complete list of competency exams is available at Nursecompetency.com. Long Term Care Nursing and multiple core competency exams are available along with benchmark information. Nurse competency exams are a measurable
educational approach to achieving superior nursing skills.

4. Improved Job Satisfaction and Retention

Staff insufficiencies can also raise the stress levels of quality healthcare workers, creating a negative impact on job satisfaction and increasing turnover. On the other hand, performing well and achieving professional goals, including patient satisfaction, brings confidence and a sense of well-being. When a nurse knows that she has the basic knowledge to perform her job, makes the right decisions and also knows when to get help, she feels that she is fully engaged in her profession. This aids in boosting job satisfaction and employee retention.

5. Monetary Savings

In the past 50 years, U.S. gross domestic product spending on health care has increased and is expected to reach 21% by 2023. Such an increase in health care spending is not yielding a comparable improvement in patient care. On average, the U.S. spends twice as much on health care per capita, and 50 percent more of total GDP than other industrialized nations. This increased expense isn't reflected in longer lives, lower infant mortality, universal access or improved quality of care. Much evidence shows that significant health care spending is wasted. Prevention of escalating health impairment through competent practice in post-acute care facilities can both improve health and reduce cost.

The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research guidelines resulted in a massive drop in one facility's pressure ulcers. Before the project the frequency was 12 to 25 percent. After guideline implementation, the incidence of pressure ulcers was negligible. Fees paid to a wound consulting physician decreased by $12,800, while the cost savings from reduced pressure ulcer cases reached $122,000 annually. This case clearly demonstrates how prevention effected through adequate clinical training supported a significant decrease in long term health care expenses, yet at the same time provided measureable improvement in long term health care quality. Basic nursing practices and assistance managed to save millions of dollars that could have ended up being spent on more serious conditions such as incontinence, fractures and pressure sores.

Other cost improvements stem from reduction of litigation expenses. Poor decisions are often cited as the root cause in lawsuits, especially in malpractice suits that result in large settlements. Error can be mitigated through good training and good procedures.

In the long run, pre-employment testing will result in a decrease in errors and improved safety, leading to better patient health and improved value.