

# *Chair's Award*



Colleen Marlatt, Cornerstone Clinical Consulting, is well recognized in Washington State as the expert in skilled nursing facility resident assessments and the processes used to determine the level of nursing resources needed to provide appropriate care for clients. Colleen has participated as an expert adviser to facility inter-disciplinary teams regarding State and Federal requirements for the MDS (Minimum Data Set), and worked many years as a corporate clinical reimbursement specialist.

During the 2016 legislative session, Colleen was instrumental in bringing to light human elements to a very complex law that targeted forty-five percent of the current nursing home Medicaid population as inappropriate for nursing home care simply because they fell under certain assessment codes.

Colleen was able to decode the jargon for Legislators by providing numerous client profiles of individuals in these assessment codes with very high care needs, including those with dementia, complex physical needs, and behavioral health needs. She rallied the nurses in our state who went to Olympia to meet with numerous legislators and led our nurse panel in testimony before the Senate committee. She met with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to break down technical details in an understandable way and helped educate DSHS staff on why the law could have unintended consequences. Colleen engaged providers and community members in letter writing and phone calls to bring awareness to the issue and to advocate for change. Thanks to Colleen, when Legislators now hear the words “RUGs” “ADLs” or “PA-PE”, they understand that we’re talking about vulnerable seniors with complex care needs that must be served in a skilled nursing home. These are not residents capable of being discharged to a community based setting.

Colleen’s expertise, passion and advocacy for patient safety stems from her many years of working as a registered nurse providing excellent patient care. She continues her passion and advocacy to keep seniors safe and ensure appropriate care in the right care setting today and is deserving of our gratitude and this year’s [2016] Chair’s Award.