Appendix A – Long-term Care Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment Tool

Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA) is a validated method for assessing frail older adults in ambulatory and acute care environments which embraces this complexity [29, 30, 31]. The CGA is a holistic assessment which documents an older patient’s health status, including cognition (e.g., dementia, delirium), mood, mobility, function, appetite, weight, bowel and bladder function, medical conditions, and medications [32].

A version of the CGA, the “LTC-CGA” (Long-Term Care Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment), has been modified and validated for use in LTCF [33]. Modifications from the original CGA to better suit the LTCF setting include documentation of behavioural disturbances common in dementia, foot and dental care requirements, skin integrity, if a legal next of kin has been appointed, and goals of care (e.g., whether resuscitation is to be attempted or hospital transfer for acute illness). The LTC-CGA currently exists in a one page paper format on the resident’s chart (see figure 4).

As part of a larger “Care by Design” program, the LTC-CGA was implemented in LTCF within Capital District Health Authority in Nova Scotia, with the aim of improving quality of care and health outcomes for frail older residents of LTCF. Family physicians caring for LTCF residents are mandated to complete the LTC-CGA for every resident, and to keep it updated every six months and after any significant change in health status. The tool is meant to have a prominent place in the LTCF chart in order to guide care in that setting, and it is also designed to accompany residents who are transferred between facilities and to acute care in order to ensure clear communication of baseline health and function. The LTC-CGA has the potential to be a powerful tool for assessment and communication in LTCF, however its uptake (i.e., is it completed fully, is it accompanying residents who are transferred to acute care settings?) and acceptability (i.e., is it easy to use? Useful? Meeting needs?) to end users are not known.
Figure 4 Long-Term Care Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment