ACP Releases New Pressure Ulcer Guidelines

The American College of Physicians (ACP) recently released new clinical practice guidelines on the risk assessment, prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers. They conducted a systematic review of available literature in order to compare the evidence of various risk assessment tools and the benefits and potential harms of strategies that prevent pressure ulcers.

This review led to the following recommendations:

1. That clinicians perform a risk assessment to identify patients who are at risk of developing pressure ulcers (weak)
2. That alternating-air mattresses or alternating-air overlays should not be used in patients who are at increased risk of developing pressure ulcers (weak).
3. That clinicians should choose advanced static mattresses or advanced static overlays in patients who are at increased risk of developing pressure ulcers (strong)

Sixteen trials reported harm for interventions that prevent pressure ulcers, including mattresses, support systems, nutritional supplementation, repositioning, dressings and creams. Although no serious treatment-related harms were reported, the evidence was insufficient to conclude how harms of preventive interventions vary.

The ACP noted that data on the efficacy of pressure ulcer interventions came from single studies. As such, “more research is needed on the comparative efficacy of pressure ulcer risk assessment tools and their efficacy compared with clinical judgment,” the ACP concluded in its guideline.

In addition, the ACP issued three recommendations for treatment of pressure ulcers:

1. That clinicians use protein or amino acid supplementation in patients with existing pressure ulcers to reduce wound size (weak)
2. That clinicians use hydrocolloid or foam dressings in patients with existing pressure ulcers to reduce wound size (weak)
3. That clinicians use electrical stimulation as adjunctive therapy in patients with existing pressure ulcers to accelerate healing (weak)

In their recommendations, however, the ACP noted that the relationship between wound size reduction and healing rate is inconclusive, as many studies assessed reduction in wound size or rate of healing rather than complete wound healing. They suggested, “more evidence is needed on intermediate outcomes as predictors of complete healing, the most important outcome.”
Simple Skin Test Could Help detect Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s Diseases

According to a recent study by a team of scientists at the Central Hospital at the University of San Luis Potosi in Mexico, a relatively simple skin test could eventually lead to the early diagnosis of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases. Research suggests that minimally invasive skin biopsies could detect the presence of abnormal proteins, which are associated with these diseases—the two most frequently diagnosed degenerative diseases of the brain.

“We are confident that [skin tests] will prove a valuable tool for the diagnosis of these diseases,” stated Ildefonso Rodriguez-Leyva, the lead author for the study.

For the study, the team focused on the skin as a possible biomarker for the brain diseases because both organs have the same embryological origin. The researchers took skin biopsies from 65 people and examined the samples for antibodies related to abnormal proteins, which have been implicated in Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

Rodriguez-Leyva noted that this initial study was only the beginning. “We need to make a larger study,” he explained, “and to get our results replicated by other researchers to give validity to the test.”

C. Difficile Germ Infects 500,000 Americans a Year

A recent report by U.S. health officials showed that nearly half a million Americans were infected with the Clostridium difficile bacteria in 2011, resulting in nearly 30,000 deaths. These infections have become increasingly common over the last few decades, in health care facilities as well as other people in their communities, according to Dr. Michael Bell, the deputy director of healthcare quality promotion for the CDC’s National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infections Disease.

C. diff is often linked to the use of antibiotics, which can destroy the natural bacterial balance in the colon and allow C. diff to take over. This infection can be severe, leading to colon damage that may require surgery to repair. It also spreads easily and once cured may return. “One in five patients has at least one relapse that requires treatment,” said Bell.

Though anyone can get C. diff elderly individuals have a higher risk. According to the report, which included data from 10 areas of the country in 2011, two-thirds of C. diff infections occurred in hospitals and nursing homes. In addition, approximately 80 percent of those patients with community-associated infection had some contact with health care settings, such as a doctors office or clinic.

Experts agree that the careful prescribing and using of antibiotics and infection control practices in health care settings are key to curb C. diff infections.

Mindfulness Meditation May Bring Relief to Sleep Deprived Seniors

Fifty percent of seniors (ages 55 and older) have difficulties falling asleep and staying asleep, according to researchers. This lack of quality sleep can lead to daytime fatigue and depression as well.

A recent randomized clinical trial tested two different programs to help seniors get to the quality sleep they need pitted a mindfulness meditation program vs. a sleep hygiene education program, to see which one was more successful. The mindfulness meditation program helps seniors to focus their attention and awareness on the present moment without judgement or reaction to any thoughts. The sleep hygiene education program teaches sleep improvement skills.
Researchers were surprised to find that seniors got more relief from the meditation program. “Mindfulness meditation appears to have clinical importance by serving to reduce sleep problems among the growing population of older adults, and this effect on sleep appears to carry over into reducing daytime fatigue and depression symptoms” stated David S. Black, assistant professor of preventative medicine at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of California.

For more about this study, click here to read the full article from Futurity.org.

**March 2015 Observances**

**Next Week is Long Term Care Administrators Week:** Since 1994, the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) has sponsored this national observance each March to celebrate and honor health care administrators and the work that they do. For more information on this year’s celebration (March 8-14, 2015)—including ideas on how to recognize your administrator and more—click here.

**Next Week is National Patient Safety Awareness Week:** March 8-14, 2015 is also National Patient Safety Awareness Week, which was designed by the National Patient Safety Organization to promote the importance of safety in health care and of being involved in your own care. The theme for this year’s celebration, “United in Safety,” focuses on patient engagement and highlights how important it is for providers, patients and their families to have a good relationship based on open communication. Click here for more information.

**This Month is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month:** Sponsored by the Special Needs Alliance since 1987, this month long observance was put into place to bring awareness to developmental disabilities. It is important this month, and all year long, for providers that cater to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to learn about programs for their residents and provide them with the training and tools that they need to participate in and contribute to society in greater numbers.

**LTC Trend Tracker℠ – Your Quality and Performance Solution**

Skilled nursing care centers have a lot to keep track of: Five Star ratings, quality measures, staffing, cost reports … the list goes on. It’s challenging enough to keep a center going, nonetheless keep track of every aspect. However, properly keeping track of this information could set your center apart from those that just stay afloat, to those that thrive.

That’s why the American Health Care Association (AHCA) created LTC Trend Tracker, a web-based tool that enables long term and post-acute care providers to find all this information in one central place. This AHCA member service gives you access to government data collected by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on skilled nursing centers. It also includes exclusive reports on hospital readmissions and discharge to community rates you can’t find anywhere else. All this data is at your fingertips, and with it, you can build and save custom reports to understand your performance.

This sort of information couldn’t be more important as our profession continues on a quality journey. LTC Trend Tracker allows you to monitor your progress on quality measures, Five-Star, Quality Initiative goals and more. Use it to identify areas your organization should address and set your own quality goals. If you’re doing well, LTC Trend Tracker can help you demonstrate your success to your consumers and partnering providers with verifiable results.

However, monitoring only your own performance isn’t enough to stay relevant in today’s long term and post-acute care market. LTC Trend Tracker provides information on your fellow providers from a local, regional and national perspective, so you can see how you measure up.* Benchmark yourself to those of your peers and keep your organization ahead of the curve.

AHCA recently revamped LTC Trend Tracker to make the tool cleaner, faster and easier to use. With a more modern look and feel, it is now more intuitive, so you can navigate through and find customizable information. The new platform also has a sleeker, yet more comprehensive dashboard. So right when you login, you can see how you’re trending on key
metrics. Additionally, you can create and save your favorite reports and quickly jump to the data trends that matter most to you. And you can instantly email those reports to share with staff or collaborate with area providers.

AHCA will continue to add features to LTC Trend Tracker throughout 2015, such as Length of Stay and turnover data. Look for more information to come on new features and check out this video to learn more. And if you haven’t signed up, visit www.ltctrendtracker.com today!

*Article supplied by AHCA.
*An individual organization’s information stays private. LTC Trend Tracker only reports in the aggregate.

AHCA/NCAL Information

AHCA Joins Caucus to Raise Awareness of the Challenges Faced by Caregivers
AHCA recently took part in the launch of the Assisting Caregivers Today (ACT) caucus event on Capitol Hill as a charter member. The event saw AARP, AHCA and several other national organizations joined by U.S. Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) and U.S. Representatives Diane Black (R-TN) and Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM) in the announcement of the formation of the ACT Caucus. The caucus is intended to help bring greater attention to family caregiving and engage Members of Congress on key issues surrounding caregiving. In a press release, AHCA reminded participants that “…Family caregiving does not stop at the front door of a care center.” According to AARP, about 42 million family caregivers provide over 40 billion hours of unpaid care to an adult with limitations in daily activities. The estimated economic value of these unpaid contributions was $450 billion in 2009

NCAL Offers Consumer Handout on Falls in Assisted Living
A new handout was recently developed by NCAL to educate consumers on the risk for falls in Assisted Living facilities, while also encouraging them to take part in managing the risks. The document, “A Conversation About Falls in Assisted Living,” addresses frequently asked questions to spark the conversation between staff and consumers. It can be used in admission packets or given to consumers or family members for future use.

Realizing that not every fall can be prevented, the NCAL resource ultimately attempts to make residents and family members a part of the solution before events occur.

Visit NCAL’s Managing Falls Web page for more information.

Provider Magazine Now Accepting Nominations for their 20 To Watch!
Provider is now accepting nominations for its third annual 20 To Watch list. AHCA/NCAL is looking for rising stars from member facilities—from housekeeping staff to CEO—who exemplify the dedication, hard work and compassionate care required for a commitment to improving the quality of life for all residents. Finalists will be featured in a summer issue of Provider and commemorated on our special “20 To Watch” website. Nominations are due April 17. For more information on how to submit nominations, click here.

National Nursing Home Week 2015
It’s never too early to start planning for this year’s National Nursing Home Week (NNHW)— May 10-16, 2015! The festivities will be here before we know it. Are you ready to Bring on the Fiesta?

Your facility staff and residents are sure to have a good time focusing on “Familia, Vida and Amor” (family, life, love) throughout the week. Check out the NNHW webpage for planning ideas and much more!

March Webinars
AHCA/NCAL offers webinars each month on a variety of important topics. March webinars include:

- What Employers Need to Know Regarding ACA Reporting and Tax Requirements
  March 25, 2015 – 2:00 p.m. EST
**IHCA PAC Information**

**IHCA PAC Associate & Individual Member Monthly Giveaway Promotion**

The IHCA PAC has made a conscious effort to expand the role of the associate and vendor community in PAC activities in 2015 and beyond. We understand that not everyone is able to participate as a sponsor at the large event level, but now we are offering an alternative opportunity to get your name out in front of our facility members and help the IHCA PAC at the same time.

**Say hello to our new monthly giveaway concept!** At the beginning of the year we introduced our new raffle program. Each month an IHCA Associate or Individual Member donates a prize to the IHCA PAC, be it a pair of baseball tickets, a spa day certificate, a 30 day all inclusive trip to Europe (okay, that one may be a little excessive), a trial week of the service you offer as an associate member, etc. The IHCA PAC Newsletter for that month will do a feature on the donating member, and offer members the opportunity to purchase chances to win the prize, usually in the $25 - 50 range. As the monthly giveaway sponsor, you would be the featured Associate or Individual Member in the PAC Newsletter for that month, as well as receiving mention in the weekly *IHCA News Brief*. The giveaway culminates with a grand prize drawing at the 65th Annual Convention and Expo in September in Peoria, with the grand prize still TBD. All past prize donors will be honored in materials promoting that event as well. Additionally, all sponsors and donors will receive mention in the IHCA Annual Report--PAC section, as well as ongoing mention on the IHCA PAC website.

If you have an item or service that you would like to donate to this fun cause, and raise a little awareness for your company at the same time, get in touch with Matt Hartman or Ashley Snavely right away!

**March Giveaway - $250 Spa Certificate!**
The March IHCA PAC raffle prize will be a $250 spa gift certificate to the winner's local spa of choice. The Raffle opens on March 1. *Here's how it works:* You pay $25 per chance to win! Enter as many times as you want for a better chance. Keep in mind that each monthly drawing you participate in will also place your name in the Grand Prize Drawing at the 65th Annual Convention and Expo in September. Print off this flyer to advertise it to your staff! Click here to access the entry form to fill out and return with your entry fee ($25/chance to win!). All proceeds will go to the IHCA PAC.

Please make checks out to IHCA PAC and send your payment along with your entry form to:
IHCA PAC -- Monthly Giveaway
Illinois Health Care Association
1029 South Fourth Street
Springfield IL 62703-2224

**IHCA Association Information**

**The 2015 IHCA Membership Directory & Buyers’ Guide**
By now you should have received your copy of the 2015 IHCA Membership Directory & Buyers’ Guide. If you did not receive a directory, or you would like extra copies, please contact Ashley Caldwell. Don’t forget—this publication contains a wealth of information on your fellow IHCA members, vendors, legislators and more! In addition, you can access the electronic version (PDF) of the directory on our website, in the Publications Archive.

**Have You Registered for the IHCA Public Policy Forum?!**
Our Public Policy Forum is just days away—have you registered to attend? Next Tuesday's event includes educational sessions that will cover a variety of public policy issues—including an IHCA Legislative, Regulatory and Political Agenda update, a town hall discussion on the 2015 Illinois Budget and reimbursement issues and information on public relations and media involvement. Our outstanding lineup of speakers includes IHCA’s own Ashley Snavely and Bill Bell, Matt Werner of M. Werner Consulting and Greg Cox of C&G Consulting, Jim Hunter and Julie Standerfer of eHealth Data Solutions and more! Nursing home administrators, social workers, physical therapists/PTAs and licensed nurses will earn 3 clock hours of continuing education for attending.
Following the educational sessions, participants will head over to the Capitol to speak with local legislators about key issues concerning long term care. The day will end with a reception at the Inn at 835 where participants can mingle with their peers and legislators in a relaxed atmosphere.

Click here for more information. Register today before it's too late!

IHCA Member Spotlight

IHCA Associate Member – R.D. McMillen

After founding a janitorial supply company in 1965, Mr. McMillen quickly realized that service and training were seriously lacking in most of his customers’ facilities. Not long after, Mr. McMillen and his son were traveling the entire state and beyond, providing quality products, training and services. He became so well known in Central Illinois, major janitorial equipment companies started coming to him to demonstrate and give feedback on their new equipment lines prior to full production. R.D. McMillen Enterprises represents some of the industry leaders in both equipment and chemicals ensuring that they are always offering the best and latest janitorial products and services on the market today. Mr. McMillen has formed a staff with hundreds of years of industry experience and thousands of hours of training.

Glay McMillen now leads the company's sales and marketing team with more than 30 years of experience. Glay is CIMS certified and is an infection control specialist, conducting more than 100 in-service training sessions per year. The staff also includes Bill Harvey who brings more than 10 years of industry experience plus a B.S. in Organizational Improvement, Six Sigma Green Belt, Six Sigma Lean and CIMS certification. R.D. McMillen Enterprises has developed a staff that is a full service Jan/San provider from carpet cleaning to equipment repair, from laundry systems to warewashing systems.

Please contact or visit us at www.rdmcmillenent.com.

Interested in Seeing Your Company or Facility Featured in Our IHCA Member Spotlight?

IHCA is proud of our diverse membership and all of your successes and accomplishments. Has your company recently celebrated a milestone? Accomplished a goal? Undergone a major change? Do you have positive stories or news to share? Would you just like to get your name out there among your fellow IHCA members? If you would like to see your company or facility recognized in Members Only--Associate Members, Facilities, Corporations alike--contact acaldwell@ihca.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!