GAO Recently Released Report Looking at State Program Integrity IT Systems

The General Accounting Office (GAO) recently released a report, *Medicaid Information Technology: CMS Supports Use of Program Integrity Systems but Should Require States to Determine Effectiveness*. It evaluates the use of varying types of information technology (IT) systems to support efforts to prevent and detect improper Medicaid payments by 10 different states.

According to the report, all 10 states had implemented a Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) to process claims and support their program integrity efforts, and seven had implemented additional types of systems to meet specific needs. Three states were operating MMISs that were implemented more than 20 years ago, but seven states had upgraded their MMISs and two of those had done so in the past two years. Additionally, seven states had implemented other systems, such as data analytics and decision support systems that enabled complex reviews of multiple claims and identification of providers' billing patterns that could be fraudulent.

For more information, please [click here](#) to read the full report.

Nurse Assessment Coordinator Study Report Released

The American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination (AANAC) has released the summary report of its 2015 Nurse Assessment Coordinator Study. AANAC does this study in order to better understand the issues affecting nurses in long term care in regards to their performance, satisfaction and the challenges they face each day.

Here are a few highlights from the report:

- Over 40 percent of Nurse Assessment Coordinators (NACs) are RNs with an Associate Degree in Nursing
- 56 percent of NACs have 10 or more years of experience as NAC
- NACs report that they spend an average of 10 hours a week in meetings
- 61 percent of NACs report that they are responsible for ICD coding and spend an average of 91 minutes per week on this activity

[Click here](#) to view the 2015 Nurse Assessment Coordinator Study Report.

Robotic Sock Designed to Prevent Blood Clots

Scientists from the University of Singapore have developed a specialized robotic sock that can be used to promote blood circulation and reduce the risk of vein thrombosis (DVT) for immobile or bedridden patients, according to an [article](#) on
Blood clots along the lower veins of the legs can be fatal if they reach the heart or lungs. Bedridden individuals can face up to an 18 percent risk for developing DVT, which is currently treated with anti-coagulation drugs. Unfortunately, these drugs can have some dangerous side effects, including increased risk of excessive bleeding, which can be fatal. The article notes that existing mechanical compression devices and compression stockings show no significant reduction in the risk for DVT but that the new device should help address some of the main issues.

The robotic sock was designed to mimic the extension and contraction tentacle movements of coral. Made by attaching lightweight silicon rubber actuators integrated with a programmable pneumatic pump-valve control system to a soft cotton sock, this new device stimulates ankle joint motions in order to facilitate blood flow in the leg.

“Given its compact size, modular design, and ease of use, the soft robotic sock can be adopted in hospital wards and rehabilitation centers for on-bed applications to prevent DVT among stroke patients or even at home for bedridden patients,” explained Raye Yeow, assistant professor in the biomedical engineering department at the University of Singapore.

The robotic sock will undergo tests in a series of clinical trials this year. Feedback will be used to help researchers improve the device for future use.

Researchers Have Developed Balance Simulation Device for Parkinson’s Patients

Parkinson’s disease is characterized by reduced levels of dopamine, a neurotransmitter, in the brain. Nearly all patients diagnosed with the disease are prescribed levodopa, a drug that stimulates the production of dopamine in the brain, but the drug can have side effects, like dyskinesia. Researchers in Sweden have recently developed a pocket-sized vestibular device that stimulates the sense of balance that they believe could help Parkinson’s patients. The device uses electric “noise” currents, similar to the way a TENS machine is used to stimulate nerves and muscles to reduce pain, to stimulate the balance organs without creating a balance disturbance. It is operated via patches attached to a patient’s head behind the ears.

One small study has already been completed, which gave researchers encouraging results for the device; however, more research will need to be done before developers take the device public. For more information, click here to read the full article from NewsDaily.

‘Smart Bandage’ Uses Electrical Current to See Wounds Before They’re Visible

Researchers from the University of California have developed a “smart bandage” that uses electrical currents to detect early tissue damage from pressure ulcers before they can be seen by the naked eye—when they are just beginning to form. Pressure ulcers affect an estimated 2.5 million people in the U.S. alone and add up to an annual cost of $11 billion. This new bandage could act as an early warning system for spot-checking target areas on patients or monitoring how a wound is healing.

“By the time you see signs of a bedsore on the surface of the skin, it’s usually too late,” stated Michael Harrison, professor of surgery at University of California, San Francisco, and a co-investigator of the study.

The device, which uses an array of dozens of electrodes printed onto a thin, flexible film that discharges a very small current between them, creates a spatial map of the underlying tissue. It looks at the electrical properties of the tissue to access damage, which is not currently done in clinical practice.

The outlook for the “smart bandage” and other similar devices is bright according to researchers. For more information, click here.
March 2015 Observances

Tomorrow is World Oral Health Day: Brought to you by the World Dental Federation (FDI), World Oral Health Day is meant to bring recognition to the importance of maintaining good oral health. A healthy mouth can greatly benefit overall health. Ninety percent of the world’s population will suffer from oral diseases in their lifetime and many of them can be avoided with increased governmental, health association and society support and funding for prevention, detection and treatment programs. For more information, click here.

Next Tuesday is The American Diabetes Association Alert Day: This day is meant to bring awareness to diabetes and to educate the public on the symptoms, dangers and treatments of the disease. Take the one-minute diabetes risk assessment to see if you are at risk for Type 2 Diabetes and encourage those around you to take it as well. Click here for a fact sheet on Alert Day.

This Month is National Social Work Month: Take the time this month to recognize your outstanding social work professionals and the important contributions they make to long term care facilities every day! For more information, visit www.naswdc.org.

AHCA/NCAL Information

The 2015 AHCA Elijay, LLC Report Was Recently Released

Click here to view the report. Matt Werner was kind enough to pull together the Illinois information together for us. Here are some of the highlights:

- Illinois 2014 is $136.14, while costs are $169.70 leaving a disparity of $33.57.
- Illinois ranked 49th or second to only South Dakota, which had a rate of $128.
- Medicare average rate was $482.86, which does not include Part B or Med Advantage.
- Nationally, unreimbursed allowable Medicaid costs for 2014 are projected to exceed $6.7 billion.
- Expressed as a shortfall in reimbursement per Medicaid patient day, the estimated national average Medicaid shortfall for 2014 is projected to be $21.20, which is 12.6 percent lower than the preceding year’s projected shortfall of $24.26. Illinois’ shortfall is $33.57.
- For a typical 100-bed facility in which 63 percent of residents rely on Medicaid for coverage, this shortfall would mean a loss of more than $487,000 annually.

Click here for the AHCA Link to Medicaid Shortfall Report.

The 2014 AHCA Quality Report Is Now Available!

AHCA publishes the Quality Report each year to keep members, policymakers and the public informed about the advancements in quality care that stem from the more than 9,000 member centers nationwide. The report provides an overview of the latest national trends in the profession and updated information on how skilled nursing care centers are performing. Beyond identifying trends in the profession, the report provides a snapshot of how AHCA members are living out the mission of "Improving Lives by Delivering Solutions for Quality Care."

This month, AHCA released its 2014 Quality Report. The report identifies key quality improvement trends in skilled nursing care centers at the national and AHCA membership levels, including:

For more information about the Quality Report, click here. You may view the full report for more information or click here for the one-page highlights.

There is Still Time to Submit Nominations for Provider Magazine's 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
National Nursing Home Week (NNHW) — May 10-16, 2015, will be here before we know it! Has your facility already started planning? Your facility staff and residents are sure to have a good time focusing on "Familia, Vida and Amor" (family, life, love) with this year's theme—Bring on the Fiesta! Visit the [NNHW webpage](http://nnhw.org) for planning ideas and much more!

Also, check out the AHCA/NCAL [online store](http://store.ahcancal.org) for themed products, like buttons, banners, t-shirts and more that could help make your NNHW special!

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. EDT

April Webinars
April webinars include:

- **Update from HUD's Office of Residential Care Facilities (ORCF) – the Section 232 Program**
  April 1, 2015 – 2:00 p.m. EDT

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 opened 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](http://ihcapac.org) 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

Don’t Forget to Sign up for Next Week’s Lunch and Learn!
The March session is scheduled to take place next Wednesday, March 25, at the IHCA office. Sponsored by ONR, the web seminar will focus on visual impairments in the elderly. Vision Impairment. Vision Impairment is the 3rd ranked cause of restricted activities of daily living in elderly persons. It can decrease individuals’ independence and safety and often leads to falls, depression and isolation. Senior communities (SNFs, ALFs and IRFs) can increase resident safety and satisfaction by implementing easy modifications to the environment in the resident living spaces, facilities and community public areas. This session provides the education, training and resources for evaluation of the community, analysis of findings and application of solutions unique to the specific visual problems and challenges applied to aging and disease. Click here to view the brochure.

Have You Registered for the 18th Annual Resources for Success?!
Be sure to join us in Springfield, April 8 & 9, 2015 for IHCA/LTCNA’s 18th Annual Resources for Success! This year’s conference is “All About the Survey Process...Before, During and After.” Sessions include preparing for the survey; using QAPI, QMs and CASPER reports to assist in the survey; how to manage the survey once the surveyors enter the facility; how to manage the survey cycle; POCs and IDR; and the importance of customer service before during and after the survey. Check out the Resources for Success page for more information or click here to view the brochure.

Interested in Exhibiting at IHCA’s 65th Annual Convention and Expo in September?
The Changing Face of Long Term Care is a fantastic theme that is sure to bring a lot of good times along with it. The expo this year will be full of color and the fun that comes with a mardi gras theme—are you ready to be a part of it all? Exhibit at this year’s show! Booths are still available! Click here to view the Expo Prospectus prospectus.

IHCA Member Spotlight

IHCA Associate Member – PointClickCare
PointClickCare helps health care providers meet the challenges of senior care by enabling them to achieve the business results that matter – enriching the lives of their residents, improving financial and operational health and mitigating risk.

Recently recognized as the #1 long term care software vendor by KLAS Research, PointClickCare’s cloud-based software platform takes a person-centered approach to managing senior care, connecting health care providers across the senior care continuum with easy to use, regulatory compliant solutions for improved resident outcomes, enhanced financial performance and staff optimization.

Over 10,000 skilled nursing and senior living facilities use PointClickCare today, making it the North American health care IT market leader for the senior care industry. For more information on PointClickCare’s ONC certified software solutions, please visit www.pointclickcare.com or follow us on Twitter @PointClickCare.

Attend an upcoming webinar!
Defaulting to Day 8 can kill your revenue.

Join us on March 25 at 2:00 p.m. ET for MDS Rocket Science Demystified. Gain valuable insight into making your MDS work for you!
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!