Three Reasons to Strengthen Your Resident Council

Introducing a Resident Council to your center can be greatly beneficial, even though the staff time required or the potential for problems with surveyors because of something written in meeting notes may make you question the decision. Though these are genuine concerns that need to be considered, finding a way to manage those concerns and move forward with the process will help your center—residents and staff—in the long run. In a recent column for McKnight’s Long Term Care News (The World According to Dr. El), Dr. Eleanor Barbera, Ph.D., noted three surprising reasons to establish and/or bolster your center’s Resident Council. Those reasons are:

1. **Residents tell it like it is:** You know those things your staff members see but don't mention because they don't want to rock the boat? Residents are far more likely to speak up than the average staff member because they're not worried about losing their jobs. Tap into this important source of info and find out what's really working, and not, in your facility. Residents will tell you what you need to know to make your facility shine enough to attract more residents.

2. **Free labor:** Let's face it: While everyone else is running around your organization like lunatics because they're short-staffed, your residents are sitting around hoping for something interesting to do. We have a pool of diverse, experienced, motivated and often bored individuals yearning to be put to good use. Sure, they'll need some help to overcome their physical limitations, but working together they can effectively address many seemingly intractable problems. Maybe they could raise money to contribute toward an herb garden for the patio or start a welcoming committee to reduce the isolation of new residents. Ask them what they want to do — it might be exactly what's needed to revitalize demoralized staff members and energize your institution.

3. **A marketing goldmine:** That herb garden I mentioned? That's going to brighten the faces of new prospects touring your establishment. And when you tell them it was conceived of and designed by residents? That's exactly the kind of place people want to be a part of — a setting where Mom or Dad can be an active part of the community despite their health challenges. Write about it on your website, shout it from the rooftops and see what else your resident council will come up with to make you look good.

If your resident council is languishing or lackluster, rather than lively and constructive, your local ombudsman can help get things back on track. Contact The National Consumer Voice for more information. *Tell them Dr. El sent you.*

To read Dr. El's full article, [click here.](#)
New Study: 1 in 10 Stroke Rehab Interruptions May Be Preventable

A recent study published in the *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation* shows that interruptions in inpatient rehabilitation can occur for some stroke patients, as well as patients with brain and spinal cord injuries. However, the study also shows that at least one out of every 10 interruptions could be prevented, which would result in better patient outcomes and lower health care costs according to the researchers.

For this study, a research team from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston analyzed Medicare data from approximately 80,000 patients undergoing inpatient rehab for stroke (72,000), brain injury (7,100) or spinal cord injury (660), all of whom went directly to rehabilitation upon leaving the hospital.

According to the researchers, interruptions occurred in 0.9 percent of stroke patients, 0.8 percent of brain injury patients and 1.4 percent of spinal cord injuries, and in most cases the patients were transferred back to the hospital for treatment of complications. A number of causes of these breaks in rehab were found to be preventable, including dehydration, heart failure, pneumonia and urinary tract infections.

Though the study findings show that overall, inpatient rehabilitation facilities "are performing well in preventing complications," according to the research team, it was also noted that "given that more than one in 10 of the rehospitalized patients returned to acute care for a potentially avoidable condition, there is still room for improvement."

Additionally, lead researcher Addie Middleton added that "reducing rates of program interruptions and short-stay transfers will not just improve patient experiences of care, they will likely also translate to lower Medicare spending per beneficiary."

For more information, [click here](#) to view the full article from *HealthDay News*.

Previous Patients' Antibiotic Use May Increase C.Diff Risk for Other Patients Using the Same Bed

New research suggests that a patient's risk of contracting *C. difficile* may increase if they're assigned to a bed where previous patients were given antibiotics. According to the study authors, if a previous patient was given antibiotics, the chances for the next patient assigned to that hospital bed being infected with *C. diff* were nearly 1 percent. Comparitively, the chance of contracting *C. diff* was less than half of 1 percent if the previous patient was not on antibiotics.

Researchers believe that it was likely that the increased risk was due to the fact that antibiotics may cause the number of *C. diff* germ spores to grow and persist. This research shows both infection control issues and a need to prescribe antibiotics very carefully.

"This underscores the idea that hospitals are not being sanitized enough or they can't be sanitized enough," said Marc Siegel, M.D., a professor of medicine at New York University Langone Medical Center who did not participate in the study.

"There is an increased need for increased sterilization procedures between patients."

Additionally, lead researcher Daniel Freedberg, M.D., MS, with Columbia University Medical Center stated that the study "provides evidence that there is a herd effect with antibiotics. In other words, antibiotics have the potential to affect the health of people who don't themselves receive antibiotics."

To read the full article from *McKnight's*, [click here](#).

Long Term Care Centers Try New Doll Therapy Technique for Dementia Residents

According to a [recent article posted](#) on *Kaiser Health News*, some facilities across the U.S. are trying a controversial new technique known as doll therapy to ease anxiety among residents with dementia. Long term care providers using the technique say that the dolls are an alternative to medications for keeping the residents calm, and for engaging those residents who are no longer interested in or able to participate in activities.

"A lot of people with Alzheimer's are bored and may become depressed or agitated or unhappy because they aren't engaged," stated Ruth Drew, director of family and information services at the Alzheimer's Association.
It should be noted that providers who use this technique are not attempting to make their residents believe that the dolls are real babies, and they do not want to infantilize the seniors taking part in the doll therapy technique. They do, however, according to Drew, want to “meet them where they are and communicate with them in a way that makes sense to them.”

Though studies on doll therapy techniques are fairly limited, some research has shown that the technique can reduce the need for medications, diminish anxiety and improve communication. Doll therapy can also bring about new interaction between the residents and staff.

For more detailed information on this type of therapy, and some of the facilities/residents who have used it, [click here](#) to read the full article.

### October 2016 Observances

**October 22 is Make a Difference Day:** Volunteers can make a major difference in long term care facilities. Whether it’s helping staff members to lighten the load or simply spending time with residents to bring them joy, these special individuals are important to our communities. Since 1992, this day each year millions of volunteers around the world unite in a common mission to improve the lives of others. On this year’s Make a Difference Day be sure to thank your volunteers for their service! [Click here](#) for more information.

**October 16-22 is Healthcare Quality Week:** Initiated by the National Association for Healthcare Quality, this week-long observance was created to celebrate the contributions patient safety professionals have made in the field and to focus on quality healthcare. Find out more about ways you can celebrate by [clicking here](#).

**October is National Physical Therapy Month:** Each year, National Physical Therapy Month is celebrated in order to educate consumers about the unique benefits of physical therapy treatments. Check out [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org) for more!

**October is Residents' Rights Month:** Residents’ Rights Month is an annual event organized by the Consumer Voice, celebrated each October to honor residents living in all long term care facilities, including nursing homes, sub-acute units, assisted living, board and care and retirement communities. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the value of each individual resident. The theme for Residents’ Rights Month 2016 is, “My Vote Matters” with the goal of highlighting residents' right to vote and participate in the political process. [Click here](#) to view the Consumer Voice website for more information.

### AHCA/NCAL Information

**AHCA Elects New Board of Governors & NCAL Elects New Board of Directors**

At this week’s AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo in Nashville, TN, AHCA and NCAL elected their respective governing boards. During the election, Tom Coble of Oklahoma was elected for a second term as the AHCA chair, and Christian (Chris) Mason of Oregon was elected for another term as the NCAL chair. Additionally, several new members were elected to serve, including Not-For-Profit Representative Gary Kelso (Utah), Affiliated State Health Care Association Executives (ASHCAE) Representative Dirk Anjewierden (Utah), and At-Large Board Representative Janet Snipes (Colorado), who were chosen to serve on the AHCA Board of Governors. New to NCAL’s Board of Directors are ASHCAE Vice President Veronica Sharpe (Washington, D.C.) and At-Large Representative Gail Sheridan (Minnesota).

“We are proud to welcome this distinguished group of leaders to our respective Boards,” said AHCA/NCAL President and CEO Mark Parkinson. “We face many challenges and opportunities in the coming year, and I believe that we can continue to deliver solutions for quality care under Tom and Chris’ leadership.”

For more information, or to view complete lists of the members of both boards, please [click here](#) to view the AHCA/NCAL Press Release.
AHCA Files Suit Against the Department of Health and Human Services Over ROP Pre-Dispute Arbitration Rule

This past Monday, AHCA filed a lawsuit against the Department of Health and Human Services challenging the legality of a provision of a recently released regulation—The Requirements of Participation final rule. This rule, issued by CMS on September 29, will prohibit skilled and nursing care facilities from entering into pre-dispute arbitration agreements with residents at their centers, no matter how fair or beneficial those agreements may be to residents.

By filing the suit, the named plaintiffs are seeking to enforce rights under federal law, including the Federal Arbitration Act (FAA), to enter into arbitration agreements. The FAA mandates that arbitration agreements can only be changed by Congress. Congress has repeatedly rejected attempts to regulate or prohibit the use of arbitration agreements between nursing care centers and their residents.

“We are taking this step to stop what is a clear overreach by CMS. Federal law plainly prohibits CMS from issuing this arbitration regulation,” said Mark Parkinson, AHCA President and CEO. “The merits of allowing individuals in our centers and their families this legal remedy are clear: study after study shows that arbitration is fair and speeds judgments in a cost-effective manner that benefits those injured more than anyone else.”

To find out more, click here to view the AHCA Press Release.

NCAL Announces Addition of Assisted Living Measures in LTC Trend Tracker

At the AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo, which wrapped up yesterday, NCAL announced the addition of four new assisted living measures for LTC Trend Tracker: hospital admissions, hospital readmissions, the off-label use of antipsychotic medications, and occupancy rates. This expansion, which brings the total measures for assisted living providers, was made as a national effort to demonstrate the profession’s commitment to quality care through data.

“We know our assisted living communities are providing high quality care, but in today’s health care environment, we need to be able to demonstrate it,” said NCAL Executive Director Scott Tittle. “NCAL is proud to grow our assisted living footprint in LTC Trend Tracker to help providers better understand how they’re doing, share that with other health care partners and consumers, and hopefully, get recognized for their amazing work.”

Click here to read more.


NCAL recently released the 2016 edition of their report—“Assisted Living State Regulatory Review.” The data discussed in the report shows that assisted living regulations, statutes and policies in 23 states were changed this year. The annual report summarizes a selection of key state requirements for AL licensure or certification and includes information on 20 categories, such as which state agency licenses AL and recent legislative/regulatory activity.

“Adjustments in state requirements help us learn more about the evolution of assisted living itself,” said NCAL Executive Director Scott Tittle. “This year’s changes reflect that a growing number of assisted living residents are facing increasing needs, whether living with dementia or dealing with multiple chronic diseases. States are recognizing that assisted living can play a crucial, cost-effective role in caring for our nation’s seniors.”

Click here for more information about this report. Click here to view the report.

The National Quality Award Program is recruiting for Examiners and individuals to join its Board of Overseers

National Quality Award Examiner: Serving as an Examiner is an incredible opportunity for individuals interested in continuous quality improvement. Members who participate as Examiners have a much better grasp of the criteria and can use that knowledge to improve their organizations and/or submit a National Quality Award application. It’s also an excellent networking opportunity; Examiners gain professional contacts throughout the country, and make life-long friendships through the program. For more information and to submit an application, please visit the 2017 National Quality Award Examiner website here.
National Quality Award Board of Overseers: The National Quality Award Board of Overseers is also in the process of recruiting new members. Elected members will serve a 3-year term on the Board. The board is responsible for establishing award criteria, policies and procedures, evaluating all aspects of the program, developing yearly goals and more. The deadline to apply is November 11, 2016. For more information and to apply, please click here.

NCAL's Faces of Assisted Living is Now Accepting Submissions!
Honor the individuals residing and working in assisted living communities by sharing those everyday moments or special occasions. Now and through October 31, send NCAL your photos for their Faces of Assisted Living project.

This online effort was created to recognize the unique individuals residing in assisted living. New this year–NCAL will now also accept photos and stories of staff members. When you submit a photo, tell us a little more about the staff pictured: How did they get into assisted living? Why do they like their job? What resident do they remember most?

Submitted photos with completed image release forms may be featured on AHCA/NCAL’s Facebook and Twitter accounts and in future publications. Follow the submissions with the hashtag #FacesofAL.

Learn how to submit your photo(s) and check out photos from previous years at www.ahcancal.org/faces.

IHCA Association Information

Congratulations to Our IHCA Members Who Received National Quality Awards at the AHCA/NCAL Convention!
A special reception was held earlier this week at the 67th Annual AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo that recognized this year’s National Quality Award winners. Several IHCA member centers were recognized. They are:

Silver Award:
Odin Health Care Center, Odin, IL / Administrator Morgan Mulvany

Bronze Award:
Evergreen Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Effingham, IL / Administrator Josh Mathis (Illinois Leaders Class of 2016)
Coulterville Rehabilitation & Health Care Center, Coulterville, IL / Administrator Whitney Oberlink
Lakeland Rehabilitation & Health Care Center, Effingham, IL / Administrator William Wade
Nature Trail Health Care Center, Mt. Vernon, IL / Administrator Tim Bledsoe
Valley Hi Nursing and Rehab, Woodstock, IL / Administrator Tom Annarella (Illinois Leader Chairman, IHCA Secretary, and AHCA Future Leader Class of 2016)

These facilities will also be featured in the next issue of IHCA’s association magazine, LTC Today, coming your way next month! Stay tuned.

Annual Renewals – Facility Members
It’s that time of year again! In the coming weeks we will be working to update our member information, not only to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information in our membership database, but to also make sure that we are publishing the correct information in our 2017 IHCA Membership Directory & Buyers’ Guide. All members will receive outreach on one way or another. FACILITY MEMBERS: You will be receiving a membership renewal form. It will either be sent directly to the primary contact listed in our system or to the Corporate Office, depending on your organization’s preferences. When you receive these forms, please review the information closely, make any necessary changes, sign them and return them to Ashley Caldwell at the IHCA Office. You may mail them, scan and email them or return via fax at 217-528-0452, no later than October 31, 2016. If you have any questions, let Ashley know.

Please note: Some member information can be updated directly through the member portal. You will find a link to a new Fact Sheet on the portal included in your renewal materials. See below for more information on the portal.
**New Member Portal – Have You Logged in Yet?!**

IHCA recently made the switch to a new data management system/web server. This new system offers members more control over their member information and will help IHCA staff as well! If you have any questions, or need assistance using the new site, please contact Ashley Caldwell at the IHCA office (acaldwell@ihca.com | 217-528-6455). To view a fact sheet regarding the new portal, [click here](#).

**LTCNA to Offer Training With New Simulation Mannequin**

The Long Term Care Nurses Association (LTCNA) has purchased a simulation mannequin, Geri Manikin, and is offering competency testing for nurses in your facility! For the first year, LTCNA will offer a limited number of facility Charter Memberships.

The fee for the membership is $2,000 and the facility will receive 24 hours (four 6-hour days) of simulation time over the course of the year. [Click here](#) to access an informational flyer that can be used to "encourage" your facility decision maker to take advantage of this offering. For more information, contact Debbie Jackson at djackson@ihca.com or 800-252-8988.

**LTCNA Scholarship Application Now Available!**

Each year, LTCNA sponsors a nurse scholarship program offering up to two $1,000 scholarships. The 2016/2017 Scholarship Application is now available. To qualify for the scholarship:

1) You must be employed as an RN, LPN or Nurse Aide in a long term care facility/program in Illinois. If employed part-time, you must work at least 15 hours per week.
2) You must have at least one year of experience as an RN, LPN or Nurse Aide in a long term care facility/program.
3) You must be accepted in the clinical portion (3rd year) of a 4 year RN program; or be enrolled in an accredited RN program; or be accepted to an accredited graduate nursing program to earn an advanced nursing degree related to long term care.
4) You must submit proof of enrollment in nursing school.
5) You must be willing to practice as an RN in a long term care facility/program

**Deadline for submission is December 30, 2016** and scholarships will be awarded in early 2017.

**IHCA Member Spotlight**

**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.

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