Study: Nurse Practitioners Improve Transfer Process, Reduce Errors

Findings from the OPTIMISTIC (Optimizing Patient Transfers, Impacting Medical quality and Improving Symptoms: Transforming Institutional Care) project at Indiana University show that specially trained nurse practitioners can help long term care centers improve the resident transfer process and reduce errors. The OPTIMISTIC project is a program that establishes nurses and nurse practitioners at skilled nursing centers in the hopes of improving the quality of care and communication between providers, as well as reducing avoiding hospital readmissions.

For the study, nurse practitioners employed through the program visited long term care facility residents within 48 hours of returning to the facility from a hospital. The visits lasted an average of 102 minutes and covered the resident’s hospital discharge summary, medication reconciliation, advance care planning, follow-up care and education for family members. Additionally, the visits allowed the nurse practitioners to address potential care issues.

“These specially trained nurse practitioners got in touch with the hospital discharge teams and worked with the nursing facility staff and providers to improve access to critical, complex information — not an easy task,” stated OPTIMISTIC Director Kathleen Unroe, M.D., MHA, in a recent news release.

According to the study results, the origin of any issues that occurred were split fairly evenly—with 33 percent of the issues traced back to the nursing facilities, 32 percent to the facility’s physicians and 29 percent to the discharging hospitals. By identifying potential care problems, the OPTIMISTIC team helped cut hospitalizations by 21 percent in the early stages of this project.

“Telling nursing homes to do a better job isn’t the only answer,” said lead researcher Arif Nazir, M.D. “It’s the entire health care system — not just the nursing home, discharging hospital or the physician seeing the patient post-hospitalization. All three need to work on the problem and to commit more resources to patient transitions.”

For more information, click here to read the full article from McKnight’s Long Term Care News.

Columbia University to Study Infection Control and Reporting in Nursing Centers

It was recently announced that a research team from the Columbia University School of Nursing in New York, led by Patricia Stone, PhD, Centennial Professor of Health Policy, has been awarded a $375,000, one-year contract by the CDC to study the barriers to the reporting of C. difficile and multi-drug resistant organisms by nursing centers into the National
Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). The team will also be looking to find out what resources are needed to overcome these barriers.

This project, “Barriers and Facilitators for National Healthcare Safety Network Adoption in Nursing Homes” is one of more than 30 being funded by the CDC as part of the Antibiotic Resistance Solutions Initiative. The initiative is a $14 million effort to fight antibiotic resistance as it continues to grow into a bigger and bigger issue.

“The identification and reporting of infections in nursing homes,” stated Stone, “especially those caused by C. difficile and multidrug-resistant organisms, is a crucial first step toward developing better ways to prevent and reduce infection, improve resident quality of life, and reduce the cost of care. We are gratified that our research on nursing home enrollment in the NHSN will contribute to the CDC’s critical efforts to combat antibiotic resistance.”

To read more about this, click here to read the full story from the Columbia University School of Nursing. To find out more about the initiative, click here.

Number of Americans With Severe Joint Pain Continues to Rise

A new study by the CDC finds that severe joint pain afflicts a growing number of aging Americans, many of whom suffer from arthritis. According to the report, approximately 10.5 million people in the U.S. said they suffered from severe joint pain (with 'severe' being considered discomfort measuring 7 or more on the 1-to-10 rating scale) in 2002. Just two years later, in 2014, that number had risen to 14.6 million.

Researchers at the CDC believe this problem could continue to worsen, particularly since so many cases are linked to arthritis. They explained that one in every four individuals with arthritis in the study rated their pain as severe. Additionally, arthritis cases are on the rise as well. In fact, according to the CDC team led by researcher Kamil Barbour, arthritis affected nearly 23 percent of adults (more than 52 million people) from 2010 to 2012, and has been projected to affect more than 78 million adults by the year 2040.

Severe joint pain and arthritis can cause a number of issues. Nearly 46 percent of adults who said they were disabled and 52 percent of individuals who said they were unable to work cited severe joint pain as the reason.

For more on this issue, click here to read the full article from HealthDay News.

Women's Superior Verbal Skills May Mask Early Alzheimer's Disease

A recent study shows that early diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease may be more difficult to diagnose in women than on older men due to women’s increased verbal skills. This suggests that memory tests for the disease may need to be adjusted for gender difference, according to the research team who performed the study.

“Women perform better than men on tests of verbal memory throughout life, which may give them a buffer of protection against losing their verbal memory skills in the precursor stages of Alzheimer’s disease, known as mild cognitive impairment,” explained team leader Erin Sundermann of the University of California, San Diego. She conducted the research while at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City.

Because women tend to retain better verbal memory, and verbal memory tests are used to diagnose individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and mild cognitive impairment, “women may not be diagnosed until they are further along in the disease,” explained Sundermann.

The in depth study performed by Sundermann and her team included more than 1,300 individuals, with an average age of 73 years old. Of these participants, around 250 had Alzheimer’s, a little more than 670 had mild cognitive impairment and 390 had no thinking or memory issues. Researchers gave each participant a verbal memory test, and also took PET scans to see how their brain metabolized glucose. Trouble metabolizing glucose in the brain can often be a hallmark of Alzheimer’s disease.
Results of the study showed that women were inclined to have better verbal memory skills than their male counterparts, even when their brains had similar issues metabolizing glucose.

“These results suggest that women are better able to compensate for underlying changes in the brain with their ‘cognitive reserve’ until the disease reaches a more advanced stage,” Sundermann said in a journal news release. “If these results are confirmed,” she added, “adjusting memory tests to account for the differences between men and women may help diagnose Alzheimer’s disease earlier in women.”

To read more, check out the full article from CBS News.

November 2016 Observances

**November 14 is World Diabetes Day/November is American Diabetes Month:** Diabetes is a growing problem, not only in the US, but worldwide. In 2015, more than 415 million adults were living with diabetes and that number is expected to grow to more than 640 million, or one in 10 adults, by 2040. Currently, one in every two adults living with diabetes is undiagnosed. On November 14, and throughout the month of November, help spread awareness and encourage the adults in your life to get screened for type 2 diabetes. Click here for more information on World Diabetes Day 2016 – Eyes on Diabetes. Click here for more information about American Diabetes Month 2016 – This is Diabetes.

**November is National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month:** Alzheimer’s disease affects more than 15 million Americans every day—with more than 5 million Americans who suffer from the disease and millions more who care for their loved ones with Alzheimer’s or dementia. During National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, help spread awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, and be sure to say “thank you” to the special people, staff and family members alike, who care for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease. Click here for more information.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**Excellence Has No Limits – AHCA/NCAL is Now Accepting Poster Session Proposals for the 2017 Quality Summit**

The 2017 Quality Summit is scheduled for March 6–10, 2017 in Orlando. Poster Sessions are excellent forums for communicating interventions, new models of service delivery and innovative research projects. They provide a fun, interactive learning experience. This will be your opportunity to shine and share all of the great things that you've done at your center. Let AHCA/NCAL know how you have employed a QAPI or Baldrige approach to accomplish facility, company or Quality Initiative goals. The Quality Summit also provides a wonderful networking opportunity for everyone. All poster session participants will receive a certificate recognizing their participation and four will be chosen for a special moderated gallery walk.

The deadline to submit is November 22, 2016. Applicants will be notified on December 14, 2016. If you have any questions, contact Urvi Patel at upatel@ahca.org.

**AHCA/NCAL to Host Live Q&A Session with LTC Trend Tracker Team**

Join the LTC Trend Tracker team next Friday, November 11, 1-2 p.m. ET, for a Live Question and Answer session. AHCA/NCAL recently announced the launch of the new publication, Your Top Line from Long Term Care Trend Tracker. This new publication highlights metrics and graphics outlining your progress on Five-Star performance, the AHCA/NCAL Quality Initiative, SNF Value-Based Purchasing relative to peers in your market and other necessary data to help you achieve your desired goals. Already registered users of Long Term Care Trend Tracker can download publications, so sign up and log in today!

Additionally, NCAL has added four new assisted living measures to its online data collection tool LTC Trend Tracker: hospital admissions, hospital readmissions, the off-label use of antipsychotic medications and occupancy rates. The four additional measures bring the total to six for assisted living providers in LTC Trend Tracker. Reports currently exist regarding staffing (calculating turnover and retention) and customer satisfaction. NCAL member organizations now have the ability to track their progress on all of the NCAL Quality Initiative goals within one tool.
For more information, click here. To register click here.

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. The deadline to apply is December 2, 2016.

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.

IHCA Association Information

2017 IHCA Standing Committee and Task Force Commitment Forms
IHCA Committees have the responsibility for the policy review of all Association functions. As you may know, each year the IHCA Standing Committee and Task Force participation process takes place. Starting November 1 and ending November 30 you have the opportunity to nominate yourself or another member of the association to serve on one or more of the following 2017 IHCA Standing Committees and Task Force Groups: Administration/Finance & Operations; Awards Task Force; Education, Convention & Trade Show Committee; IHCA PAC; Legal Committee and Public Policy Committee.

All IHCA members are highly encouraged to participate in this process. In an effort to create diverse and widespread representation, appointments to specific committees may be limited to one participant per company. To assist in the process, individuals should be nominated for up to three committees and rank their selections in order of preference. To submit your nominations, please click here to fill out the online form or click here to download the printable form. If you wish to serve on more than one committee, please fill out a separate form for each committee, listing it as the first choice. Otherwise, the selections will be considered in order of your choices listed. If you are currently serving on an IHCA Standing Committee, please submit a form (one for each committee) to renew your commitment to serve.

Annual IHCA Membership Renewals
Facility Members – Second Notices Going Out This Week! The initial deadline for the FACILITY MEMBER renewals has passed. Second notices are in the process of being sent. If you have not already returned your renewal form, please do so as soon as possible. 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 Monday, November 21, 2016.

These forms allow us 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.

Associate & Individual Members: You will be receiving an email listing what we currently have listed in the IHCA database for you/your company. You may reply to that email with any changes for the database, or any information specifics for the directory. Look for that email by Monday, November 7.

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. If you have any questions, let Ashley know.
Convention CE Certificates
CE Certificates from last month’s 66th Annual Convention & Expo in Peoria were mailed out last week. They were sent to the participating facilities to the attention of the convention contact that was listed on the registration form. If you have changes/corrections that need to be made to your certificate, please submit the request in writing to Kelli Showalter (email her at kshowalter@ihca.com) no later than November 18, 2016.

New Member Portal – Check it out!
Our new content management system and website offer members more control over their member information and will help IHCA staff as well! Through the Member Portal you can view/manage your member information, your communications preferences and more! Starting in 2017 we will be using the communications preferences listed for each member contact to rebuild fresh, clean member email lists for our electronic publications. It is important to get all of your staff members who want to receive our newsletters set up in the member portal! More information about this will be coming soon. 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.

APPI Energy - The Proof is In the Electric Bill
Earlier this year, IHCA partnered with APPI Energy to offer association members a chance to save on energy bills. APPI Energy identifies the wide range of energy supplier prices across the U.S., and the lowest prices available among many vetted, competing energy suppliers.

Here’s how the APPI program works. APPI provides recommendations to association members regarding when to buy energy, from which supplier, and which contract length is best. APPI’s recommendations are based on extensive data analytics and more than 20 years of transaction experience. This includes evaluation of current supply contracts, proprietary price analytics, energy tariff analysis, regulatory tracking, and complete customer service.

The APPI evaluation process is free and IHCA Members are not obligated to purchase anything by going through APPI’s evaluation process. APPI can save money on natural gas expenses too. To take advantage of this exclusive membership benefit program, contact Patty Martinez with APPI at 800-520-6685.

LTCNA Holiday Luncheon and Annual Business Meeting
This year’s LTCNA Holiday Luncheon and Annual Business Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 1, 2016, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the Inn at 835 in Springfield. Karla Belzer, the Family Life Educator with the University of Illinois Extension that serves Carroll, Lee and Whiteside Counties, will present Being Mindful in a Busy World after the business portion of the event has come to a close. Licensed Nursing Home Administrators and Licensed Nurses will earn one clock hour of continuing education for attending.

The LTCNA luncheon is open to anyone who supports nurses working in long term care. There is no charge for this event, but we ask that those planning to attend be sure to RSVP so that an adequate number of meals are available. Click here to view the invitation/RSVP form.

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
Calling IHCA Members – We Want to Feature Your Company Here!!!
Are you looking for a way to reach our members? Well, this is a great way to do just that! Our Member Spotlight gives our members a space to let us know what their company (or facility) is all about! (And to brag a little too if you want to!) Your Company Information could be seen here in an issue later this year!!

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?

Ready to sign up for a member spotlight?! Contact Ashley Caldwell! Email acaldwell@ihca.com or give her a call today!