IHCA Welcomes the Inaugural Class of the IHCA Illinois Leaders Program!

IHCA recently announced the addition of a new leadership program—the IHCA Illinois Leaders Program. IHCA’s Illinois Leaders Program works to develop leaders within the Association and Illinois' long term care profession. The program is modeled after the American Health Care Association’s Future Leaders, with an exclusive group of IHCA-member professionals chosen for their demonstrated leadership skills, support of the Association and an interest in pursuing leadership pathways to improve their personal and professional skills. Graduates of the Illinois Leaders Program will receive priority nomination for the AHCA Future Leaders program.

We would like to congratulation to the first class of the IHCA Illinois Leaders Program and thank them for their commitment and participation.

2016 IHCA Illinois Leaders
Molly Carpenter, Imboden Creek Living Center
Laura Collins, Maple Lawn Health Center
Love Dave, Elmhurst Extended Care Center
Josh Mathis, Evergreen Nursing and Rehab Center
Pam Markle, Children’s Habilitation Center
Kristen Thrun, Burgess Square Health Care and Rehab Centre
Lance Tossell, Petersen Health Care

Their program kicks off next week with an informative and interactive two-day event that includes leadership training and case study discussions. Illinois Leaders will receive complimentary reading material to help instill leadership qualities. Throughout this year-long program, participants will have the opportunity to network with the IHCA Board of Directors, staff and key stakeholders through a variety of activities, including conference calls, Lobby Day events and a class graduation event at the Annual IHCA Convention and Expo. For more information on this program, and those chosen to participate, stay tuned!

FDA Approves First Flu Shot With Added Ingredient to Boost Immune Response

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved the first flu vaccine to contain an adjuvant (any compound used in vaccines to boost the immune response of recipients) for use by individuals ages 65 and older, the age group that bears the greatest burden of severe influenza and accounts for the majority of flu related hospitalizations and deaths.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated that in recent years 80 to 90 percent of seasonal influenza-related deaths and 50 to 70 percent of seasonal influenza-related hospitalizations have occurred among people 65 years of age and older.

The new vaccine, Fluad, is a trivalent vaccine—meaning that it is produced from three flu virus strains. It also contains the adjuvant MF59. MF59 is made with squalene oil, a naturally occurring substance found in people, animal and plants,
which, according to the FDA is, highly purified for the vaccine manufacturing process. “Adjuvants are incorporated into some vaccine formulations to enhance or direct the immune response of the vaccinated individual,” stated the press release sent out at the end of November.

Approval for the vaccine was based on an international clinical trial of more than 7,000 people, ages 65 and older. These individuals each received either Fluad or Agriflu (another trivalent seasonal flu vaccine) and results showed that both vaccines triggered comparable immune responses. The study concluded that Fluad is safe to use.

“Fluad provides another alternative for a safe and effective influenza vaccine in people 65 years of age and older,” said Karen Midthun, M.D., director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. “Immunizing individuals in this age group is especially important because they bear the greatest burden of severe influenza disease and account for the majority of influenza-related hospitalizations and deaths.”

Walking Speed Linked with Heart Health in Older Adults

The National Institutes of Health recently released the results of a long-running study that has been collecting data on the risk factors for heart disease in individuals ages 65 and older. Researchers looked at 10 years of data from more than 4,000 participants when they went in for their annual physical exams. The patients’ average walking pace and distance were taken into consideration and any cardiovascular events that occurred were noted by researchers.

The findings showed that seniors may be able to increase the benefits of their daily recommended walk by increasing the pace or going a few extra blocks. Researchers found that seniors who walked faster than three miles an hour had a 50 percent lower risk than those who walked slower than two miles per hour. Additionally, those who walked an average of seven blocks on a daily basis had 47 percent lower risk of heart disease than those who walked five or blocks or fewer each week.

"Our study of older Americans shows that, even late in life, moderate physical activity such as walking is linked to lower incidence of cardiovascular disease," Luisa Soares-Miranda, a postdoctoral student at the University of Porto in Portugal and lead author of the study, said in a statement.

And, though researchers noted that many studies have looked at the link between physical activity and heart health, this is one the few that has focused on older adults. Walking isn’t the only physical activity that can improve heart health, but it is one that older adults can do and enjoy. The findings in this case show the importance of light to moderate exercise throughout the life span to support better health.

MRI Sees the Lesions that Flag Future Knee Pain

A recent study by Northwestern University researchers has shown that MRIs can show worsening lesions or damage to the knee for individuals who are at higher risk to develop knee osteoarthritis (OA) from being overweight or past injuries, unlike normal x-rays. These MRI results can predict a significantly higher risk of imminent OA or painful symptoms and allow doctors to employ aggressive prevention strategies, including paying careful attention to weight and physical activity, before OA becomes a bigger problem.

Among older Americans (55 and older), 40 percent have frequent knee pain or OA, which can have just as much to do with chronic disability as cardiovascular disease. For the study, researchers looked at MRIs for nearly 850 participants who had no evidence of OA in either knee on the baseline x-ray. They assessed cartilage damage, bone marrow lesions and tears on the meniscus at two separate times, three years apart.

According to researchers, the risk of developing knee OA within three years as diagnosed by x-ray is three to 20 times greater than when diagnosed by MRI, depending on what type of lesions they have.

“These worsening lesions are an early warning sign and an opportunity to intervene before a person develops the debilitating disease,” said lead investigator Leena Sharma, professor of medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and Northwestern Medicine rheumatologist. “If we employ aggressive prevention strategies in persons with these lesions before they develop knee osteoarthritis, we may be able to delay disease development or alter its course.”

For more information about this study, click here.
Diagnose Stroke in 10 Minutes with A Single Drop of Blood

Time is precious when treating a stroke. Every minute counts. Current diagnostics can take up to three hours and require careful lab work to reach a definitive diagnosis. However, a recent development may have found a way to avoid that lengthy waiting period.

Researchers at Cornell University have developed a device that helps diagnose stroke in less than 10 minutes using only a small drop of blood. This technology could also eventually be expanded to create point-of-care devices to diagnose other conditions in both humans and animals, including traumatic brain injury, dementia and some types of cancer.

The majority of stroke patients suffer from ischemic stroke, which is a blockage of a blood vessel in the brain, and in those cases timing is key because there is a drug available to help, but it must be taken within three or four hours after the onset of symptoms. Often, by the time someone is identified as having stroke symptoms, gets to the hospital and gets tested, there isn’t time to get the full benefit of this medication. This new device could prove to be a life saver.

To diagnose a stroke, the device works to detect several bloodborne biomarkers that occur in the blood when a stroke occurs. It uses enzymes attached to nanoparticles to detect these molecules and convert the detection into light, which can be measured to diagnose stroke.

Moving forward, researchers will be collaborating with a private company to develop a specific technique for clinical trial that can eventually be used in hospitals. The system could also be tailored to detect multiple biomarkers for other conditions.

December Observances

**Next Week is National Influenza Vaccination Week:** Have you gotten your flu shot? This national observance was established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination. The CDC plans to host several activities in support of NIVW, including a Twitter chat and Thunderclap campaign. Details will be shared soon regarding when and how to participate. For more information on the flu vaccine or about NIVW check out www.cdc.gov.

**Next Week is National Hand Washing Awareness Week:** The CDC has said that “the most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands.” Washing your hands to prevent the spread of germs is very important for health care providers. Take the opportunity next week to reiterate how important hand washing is at your centers! Click here for more information.

AHCA/NCAL Information

**It’s Not Too Late to Apply for a National Quality Award!**

The Intent to Apply Deadline has passed, but you can still apply for a Quality Award. The Quality Award website has a number of resources designed to help facilities with the application process. Whether you are writing a Bronze, Silver or Gold application this year; there is something for you!

Applications will be accepted online starting Monday, December 7. All applications must be submitted by January 28, 2016 to be considered.

**Registration Is Now Open for the 2016 AHCA/NCAL Independent Owner (IO) Leadership Conference**

This year’s AHCA/NCAL IO Leadership Conference—March 16-18, 2016—promises to be better than ever with all the networking opportunities you love and educational sessions you need in an energizing and engaging atmosphere you can’t get anywhere else. The town hall format allows you to discuss all the important issues with your peers as well as a slew of top-notch speakers. Earn up to 11.5 CEUs and enjoy the beauty of sunny San Diego at the stunning Manchester Grand Hyatt. Click here to learn more, see the complete agenda, and register today!
Registration is Open for the Inaugural AHCA/NCAL Quality Summit

The AHCA Quality Symposium and the NCAL Spring Conference have joined forces to become one mighty summit—The AHCA/NCAL Inaugural Quality Summit: Where Excellence Has No Limits! With three keynote speakers, three days to network with like-minded long term care professionals and three days of targeted education for SNF and AL providers on quality improvement, performance excellence, and much more, this is sure to be a can’t miss event!! This event is scheduled for February 9-11, 2016 in San Antonio, Texas and registration is now open! Click here for more.

The Call for Posters for the Quality Summit is Now Open!

Excellence Has No Limits: Tell Us How You Did It. AHCA/NCAL is currently accepting Poster Session proposals for the Inaugural Quality Summit in San Antonio, TX. Poster Sessions are excellent forums for communicating interventions, new models of service delivery or innovative research projects. They provide a fun, interactive learning experience. This will be your opportunity to shine and share all of the great things you’ve done at your center. Click here for more information.

Just a Few Weeks Left to Register for the AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep Program and Save $100!

Save $100 on each training spot through December 31 by entering promo code GNPFALL15 (all caps) when registering. Gero Nurse Prep is a smart and effective use of training dollars. This unique program prepares nurses for the American Nurses Credentialing Center board certification test in gerontological nursing. Gero Nurse Prep Alums have a 96% pass rate on the ANCC gerontological nursing certification exam. Check out the AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep program and try a free demo today!

IHCA Association Information

Last Chance to Advertise in the 2016 IHCA Membership Directory & Buyers’ Guide!

Naylor has extended the open ad sales and the absolute deadline is next Wednesday, December 9, 2015! If you are interested in advertising your company/facility in the directory, check out the 2015 media kit for ad options and pricing. You may contact Ashley Benton, Naylor Project Leader, at (770) 576-4969 or abenton@naylor.com for more information.

Please “Like” or “Follow” IHCA!

We are continuously trying to build our social media presence! Please “Like” us on Facebook and “Follow” us on Twitter and LinkedIn. We’ve been working on growing our social media following in the past few months and want to keep that momentum going! Check it out today!

IHCA’s New Development Director Wants to Meet You!!

Kristin DiCenso, IHCA’s new Development Director, is hitting the road to get to know our members! If you would like her to visit your facility, want to learn more about how to make the most of your membership or discover how to get more involved with IHCA, please email Kristin at kdicenso@ihca.com or call 217-527-3609.

Do You Have Any Photos You Would Like to Share?

IHCA is always looking for photos from our members to use in association publications (like the upcoming 2016 IHCA Membership Directory & Buyers’ Guide, the Annual Report and more!). Do you have any photos that depict life in your facility that you would like to share? If so, contact Ashley Caldwell. Each photo must be accompanied by a signed release form for any residents in the picture.

IHCA Member Spotlight

IHCA Member Associate Member – Marcum LLP

Last month, long time IHCA member Frost, Ruttenberg & Rothblatt P.C. (FROST) merged with Marcum LLP, a top national accounting and advisory services firm. Marcum’s headquarters are located in New York City, NY and they have 25 full-service offices in major business markets throughout the U.S., Grand Cayman and China. With more than 1,400 professional staff members, including more than 180 partners, they ready, willing and able to assist their clients with their accounting and advisory needs. Marcum Group, an organization providing a comprehensive range of professional services spanning accounting and advisory, technology solutions, wealth management, and executive and professional recruiting. By merging with FROST, the company has entered the Midwest market here in the U.S.
FROST was ranked 18th among accounting firms in the Chicago area for 2015 by Crain's Chicago Business. They provided accounting, consulting, financial and tax services to privately owned companies, professional practices, not-for-profit organizations and individuals. They have been working with long term care professionals, and an active member of IHCA, for more than a decade, proving to be a go-to resource for member centers.

“We are so honored to have served as the trusted advisor for our clients for the last 60 years,” said Richard Sgarlata, FROST’s former president, who is now acting as the Marcum partner-in-charge of the Chicago and Deerfield offices. “In looking to the next 60 years and the ever-changing landscape of our industry and clients’ needs, our strategic focus on the future recognized the logical progression to join forces with a national firm that shared our values and commitment to excellence. We found the perfect match in Marcum.”

“Both of our firms have been serving clients for more than 60 years,” stated Jeffrey Weiner, Marcum’s managing partner. “In FROST we have found a team that brings additional depth to our service offering while giving Marcum a strategic presence in the center of the country. We are extremely pleased to welcome the firm to Marcum.”

For more information, click here.

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. We are always looking for members to feature, either here or in our other publications (like LTC Today magazine!). 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 Ashley Caldwell.