American Diabetes Association Releases Guidelines for Long Term Care

Earlier this month, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) released the guidelines, "Management of Diabetes in Long-term Care and Skilled Nursing Facilities." This guide is the first-ever of its kind, highlighting the differences in diabetes management for younger individuals versus older people and focusing on management of the disease in long term care facilities.

The majority of long term care residents who suffer from diabetes have type 2, so managing type 2 diabetes is a primary focus of the ADA’s guidelines. As noted in the guidelines, residents need plans that balance their glycemic levels, so determining their hypoglycemia risk is a key component of determining their glycemic goals and creating a plan of care that works for them.

The guidelines also suggest that long term care facilities should avoid the sole use of sliding scale insulin and note that liberal diets are preferable (over therapeutic diets) as more food choices benefits nutritional needs and glycemic control.

In addition, the ADA also stresses the importance of communication between diabetes patients and their health care providers. Click here for more on this topic.

Giving Up the Wheel May Lead to Mental Decline

The review of more than 15 published studies found that seniors who give up driving tend to see their mental and physical well-being decline—particularly regarding depression. Researchers have yet to determine if these health issues are a direct result of relinquishing the car keys, but they did note that it is a complicated issue and that it is likely that there is a vicious cycle for seniors regarding giving up driving.

As people age, worsening health (including vision problems, physical limitations and issues with memory, perspective and judgement) causes safety issues and seniors find themselves having to make the difficult decision to stop getting behind the wheel. For many, this then leads to significant consequences for their health, such as feeling socially isolated, out of control and depressed. It can also cause them to be less physically and mentally active, making their health conditions worse.

Researchers looked at a variety of studies that focused on different aspects of this scenario—seniors still driving vs. those no longer on the road; related depression symptoms; how their mental and physical health changed; etc. Dr. Marian Betz, a spokesperson for the American Federation for Aging Research, pointed out that this review highlighted one major issue: How does society balance road safety against the “many benefits” seniors get from driving?

"There’s a stereotype that older drivers are dangerous," stated Betz, an associate professor of emergency medicine at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. And though it is true that many seniors develop health issues that can interfere with their driving abilities, Betz went on to note that there are options available other than immediately giving up the keys.
"Older adults and their families can think about ways to limit driving," Betz said. "They can avoid night-driving, or driving on busy roads during rush hour, or in other situations that may be disorienting."

In today’s world, driving is an integral part of adult life, and seniors who are forced to give it up can feel like they are losing a part of their identity. As researchers have seen, this can have some pretty hefty consequences. It is important to help them stay engaged in the community to prevent as much of that feeling of social isolation and depression as is possible. Betz suggests that seniors and their families reach out to local senior organizations for help.

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

**Nano-Size Antacids Stop Tumors from Spreading**

Researchers at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri have been working with antacids as a way to stop tumors. Recently, they found that when engineers injected nanoparticles of calcium carbonate (the main ingredient in antacid tablets) into mice, they were able to stop tumors from spreading. This was the first time researchers have shown that they can change the pH (from acidic to more alkaline—using the calcium carbonate) using intentionally designed nanoparticles to keep the cancer from growing.

“Cancer kills because of metastasis,” says Avik Som, who is working on a doctorate in biomedical engineering in addition to a medical degree at Washington University in St. Louis. "The pH of a tumor has been heavily correlated with metastasis. For a cancer cell to get out of the extracellular matrix, or the cells around it, one of the methods it uses is a decreased pH."

Researchers, including Som, worked through a number of challenges to create several unique solutions that could be injected into the body intravenously. When they injected the nanoparticles into the mouse fibrosarcoma model on a daily basis, the tumor stopped growing; however, when they stopped the treatment the tumor started growing again.

As they move forward with this research, the team plans to work to determine the optimal dose to prevent metastasis, how to target the tumors and if this could be used with chemotherapy drugs.

To read more, click here for the full article on Futurity.org. Click here to view a video about this research.

**Widely Used Heartburn Drugs Linked to Dementia Risk in Study**

A new study suggests that a popular class of heartburn medications may raise the risk of dementia in seniors. Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) – including drugs like Prilosec, Nexium, Prevacid, etc. – which work to lower the amount of acid produced by the stomach, have been associated with higher risk, though no cause-and-effect link has been shown as of yet.

German researchers found that individuals 75 and older who regularly take PPIs had a 44 percent higher risk for dementia, compared to seniors in the same age range who do not take the drugs. To test the possible association, they collected data from a large health insurance company on nearly 74,000 seniors, ranging from 2004 to 2011 and including diagnosis and drug prescriptions. It's important to note, however, that this study doesn't specify whether or not PPIs are also available over the counter in Germany as they are here in the U.S. If that is the case, more people may be taking PPIs and the dementia risk in the study could have been overestimated.

In 2013, more than 15 million Americans used prescription PPIs and concern has been mounting that Americans might be overusing them. According to research, as many as 70 percent of PPI prescriptions in the United States have been inappropriately handed out by doctors. Additionally, it is believed that as many as 25 percent of users could, in fact, stop taking the medication without suffering increased heartburn or acid reflux.

Experts agree that while this study is intriguing and definitely worth looking into further, the information presented does not warrant doctors warning their patients off of PPI use. To evaluate the cause-and-effect relationships of the drugs with dementia risks, more research and clinical trials would need to be done.

For more on this, click here for the full article from Health.com.
February 2016 Observances

This month is American Heart Month: Heart Disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S. This month long observance is an excellent time to educate yourself, and those around you, on the symptoms, treatment and prevention of heart disease. Click here for more.

This month is National Senior Independence Month: This celebration was introduced to encourage seniors to remain in control of their daily lives. This month, encourage seniors to evaluate their lives and see what, if any, adjustments could be made to create a better lifestyle.

This month is AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month: Age-related macular degeneration affects more than 2 million Americans age 50 and older. In February, learn about vision aids and other tools that can help combat vision loss. Click here for more.

This month is National Cancer Prevention Month: This month learn more about cancer prevention. The 2016 celebration is focused on ways you can cut your cancer risk by choosing the right foods and being physically active every day. For more on this, visit www.aicr.org.

AHCA/NCAL Information

Provider Magazine to Host Twitter Chat
By the time the sun sets today, another 8,000 baby boomers will have celebrated their 65th birthday. Nearly one in seven of these individuals are already poor (or barely above the poverty line); nearly 3 million of them will have dementia or Alzheimer’s disease by the time they’re 85; they’ll make up nearly three-quarters of new HIV cases in the next few years.

So why is it that so little time and space has been given to the problems (and rewards) of an aging population?

Provider Magazine and the Bipartisan Policy Center are proud to announce the next #ProviderChats on Tuesday, February 23, 1-2 p.m. EST to discuss the Politics of Aging, 2016. Panel of experts to include: Clif Porter, senior vice president for government relations at the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living; Don Redfoot, Dementia Action Alliance; and Katherine Hayes is the director of health policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center. Click here for more information.

LTC Trend Tracker for Assisted Living – New Video
Last year, AHCA/NCAL’s data collection tool LTC Trend Tracker expanded to offer features for assisted living providers. These long term care providers can now submit their staffing data to learn more about their retention and turnover trends, as well as their customer satisfaction results. More features will continue to be added in the coming year, allowing assisted living providers to track their performance on key quality indicators.

A new video from AHCA/NCAL demonstrates the importance for assisted living members to use LTC Trend Tracker.

IHCA Association Information

LTCNA Awards Annual Scholarships!
The Long Term Care Nurses Association (LTCNA) has announced the two winners of their annual scholarship program. Each of these deserving long term care nursing professionals will receive $1,000 towards their educational expenses to further their career in long term care. Congratulations to the 2016 winners!

• Justin Sallo, Cambridge, IL – Aledo Rehabilitation and Health Care Center – Carl Sandburg College. Justin has nearly 20 year’s experience in long term care and is currently serving as an LPN. He plans to continue his LTC career and is working to become a registered nurse. He is hardworking, upbeat and professional. “Justin Sallo is an upstanding person and an awesome employee,” said Administrator Scott Widener. “He is and will be a nurse that always cares for his residents and their well-being.

• Lindsey Barnes, Alsey, IL – Scott County Nursing Center – Capital Area School of Nursing. Lindsey has been working in long term care for the past five years, and plans to continue doing so as she furthers her education and her career. At present, she is employed as a certified nursing assistant, but intends to go on to earn her advanced nursing degree. Her years as a CNA she has become a confident, reliable and compassionate long term care professional. She is dedicated to her residents and is a true asset to her facility.
The Prospectus for the 66th Annual IHCA Expo is Now Online!
Want to be a part of one of the best attended long term care events in Illinois? IHCA’s 66th Annual Convention and Expo (September 12 – 15, 2016) will be here before you know it! The best locations go fast, so now is the time to reserve your booth space. Click here to view the prospectus. All space is reserved on a first come, first served basis. In order to ensure the best selection for your booth(s), please complete and return the application, Attention: Kelli Showalter, as soon as possible.

Save the Date for the IHCA Public Policy Forum!
IHCA’s 3rd Annual Public Policy Forum will be held on April 13, 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Attendees will be informed by IHCA staff of the latest legislative issues including, LTC Medicaid Applications, Managed Care, nursing home cameras and the budget, as well as the status of state and federal regulations. After the forum you can put your knowledge to good use and lobby your state legislators on current issues long term care faces. The day will end at the Legislative Reception, held at the Inn at 835, where you can continue your conversations with legislators and fellow members. Click here to view the brochure! Until then, please don’t hesitate to contact Matt Hartman if you have any questions.

IHCA Member Spotlight
IHCA Associate Member – Medtronic Extended Care
Taking Health Care Further, Together

As a global leader in medical technology, services and solutions, Medtronic improves the health and lives of millions of people each year. At Medtronic, they believe their deep clinical, therapeutic and economic expertise can help address the complex challenges — such as rising costs, aging populations and the burden of chronic disease — faced by families and health care systems today; but, no one can do it alone. That’s why they’re committed to partnering in new ways and developing powerful solutions that deliver better patient outcomes. Founded in 1949 as a medical repair company, Medtronic is now among the world’s largest medical technology, services and solutions companies, employing more than 85,000 people worldwide, serving physicians, hospitals and patients in nearly 160 countries.

Medtronic Extended Care represents a diversity of market leading brands across five of the top ten spend categories in both long term care and home care. They are focused on delivering meaningful therapy innovations and tailored support at appropriate costs for four relevant conditions in extended care: Nutritional Insufficiency, Respiratory Compromise, Deep Vein Thrombosis and Skin Integrity. Their goal in extended care is to reduce avoidable complications and drive improvements in quality, efficiency and fiscal performance.

Join Medtronic in their commitment to take health care further, together. Learn more at Medtronic.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.