Gaps in Care Coordination Need To Be Addressed: New Report

The Measure Applications Partnership (MAP) recently released its fifth annual performance report, which noted that the new quality measures for long term care need to be designed to address gaps in care coordination and transitions. MAP operates under the National Quality Forum (NQF), a not-for-profit organization that works to bring about improvements in health care. They sent their annual report to the Department of Health and Human Services late last month.

Their recommendations covered performance measures currently under consideration for use in federal health care programs, as well as a call for measurement concepts that reflect factors that could influence Medicare spending, such as the sociodemographic, socioeconomic and psychosocial factors that affect beneficiaries.

The group noted that the measures under consideration at present are a step in the right direction in regard to remedying gaps in core long term care concepts, but that more attention needs to be paid to remaining breaks in care coordination and transitions. They also suggested that HHS test any measures that promote alignment across multiple long term care settings to better “acknowledge differences in outcomes goals between settings.”

Click here to read the full report. Click here to read the article from McKnight’s.

More Seniors Are In Need of Help with Personal Care, According to the CDC

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics recently released data showing that 7.2 percent of seniors were reported need help with activities of daily living (ADLs) last year, up from 6.6 percent in 1997. Researchers looked at ADLs such as eating, bathing, dressing and other types of movement that are key parts of personal care.

The report, which comes in the in the middle of an “aging boom” here in the U.S., showed that seniors over the age of 85 were twice as likely to require personal care assistance than their slightly younger counterparts (ages 75 to 84), and five times as likely as seniors ages 65 to 74.

It is estimated that 20 percent of the population will be 65 years old, or older, by the year 2030 and that more than 19 million seniors will need long term care by that time—more than twice the number of individuals needing LTC in 2000. As the aging population continues to grow, more long term care workers will be needed to ensure proper care is being given—at least 2.5 million workers in the next 15 years according to another study recently published.

For more on this, click here to read the full article.
A History of Reading Problems May Contribute to Misdiagnoses of Alzheimer’s

A new study published recently in the Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease sheds some light on the misdiagnoses of Alzheimer’s disease in some older individuals. According to the research, older adults who have a history of reading problems perform similarly on some neuropsychological tests to older individuals exhibiting signs of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) that are associated with Alzheimer’s.

The study, led by a research team from Stony Brook University and done in collaboration with Boston University School of Medicine, assessed the relationship between MCI classification and suspected reading disorder in more than 1800 older adults (average age of 62) in a heart study that took place between 1999 and 2005. For the purpose of this study, individuals with a previous history of dementia, stroke and other neurological disorders were excluded. Subjects were evaluated using tests often used in the assessment of cognitive complaints in older adults; these tests measured memory recall, reading, visual processing and executive functioning.

Memory complaints are highly common in older adults, which places a great deal of weight on memory test scores when assessing elderly individuals. However, as this study points out, medical professionals need to take into account developmental history and have a broad understanding of neuropsychological testing when interpreting these test scores. Memory tests are often administered alone, but this doesn’t offer a full, comprehensive understanding of a patient’s history of cognitive strengths and weaknesses. Without a comprehensive battery of testing, including testing for reading ability, misdiagnoses can occur.

“We found a strong relationship between poor reading ability and low memory test scores,” stated lead study author Brian K. Lebowitz, PhD. “Identifying the clinical significance of our finding is our next challenge.”

For more information, please click here to read the full article from the Annals of Long-Term Care.

Daylight Saving Time Linked to Higher Stroke Risk

McKnight’s Long Term Care News recently reported on a new study that shows that changing our clocks during Daylight Savings Time may increase the risk of stroke by 8 percent.

A research team from the University of Turku in Finland analyzed data from people who were hospitalized during the week of the Daylight Savings Time transition, and then compared it to the number of individuals who suffered from a stroke and were hospitalized in the two weeks prior to and after the time change. Results showed that during the two days following the change, the rate of ischemic stroke (which makes up 87 percent of all strokes) was higher by 8 percent.

Researchers say that these results reinforce previous studies that showed stroke risk was linked to circadian rhythms. These rhythms get disrupted during the time change. They also note that though the increase in stroke risk was relatively small, it was more pronounced in older individuals and could be a sign that health care professionals need to be more watchful for the signs of stroke around the time changes.

“For the staff and people living in a nursing home I think it is intuitively a good idea to try not to keep so tightly to the schedule following the DST changes,” explained lead researcher Jori Ruuskanen, M.D, PhD., “or maybe even try to adjust the sleeping time gradually over the few preceding days, e.g. 15 minutes per day, if feasible.”

Click here to read the full article.

You’re Only as Old as You Feel

Research suggests that there may be some truth in the old saying—You’re only as old as you feel. According to an article posted on the HealthDay News website last month, a new study shows that how old you feel really matters—that people who report feeling older than their actual age are more likely to be hospitalized.

Though the study does not prove an absolute cause-and-effect relationship, it does provide backup for previous research that has shown that how old you feel can affect your well-being and other health issues. “Now we know it can predict your likelihood of ending up in the hospital,” stated study author Yannick Stephan in a news release.

For this study, researchers reviewed data from three previous studies, comprised of more than 10,000 U.S. adults, between the years of 1995 and 2013. They were asked a number of questions, including how old they felt when the study
began. They also completed a questionnaire, which was designed to show if they had experienced any symptoms of depression and offered information about health concerns such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, lung disease, heart condition, stroke, osteoporosis or arthritis. Other factors, such as age, gender, race, education, etc. were also taken into consideration.

How old people say they feel "could be a valuable tool to help identify individuals at risk of future hospitalization," said Stephan. "People who feel older may benefit from standard health treatments -- for example through physical activity and exercise programs, which may reduce their risk of depression and chronic disease, and ultimately their hospitalization risk."

For more on this study, click here to read the full article.

**March 2016 Observances**

**March 13-19 is Long Term Care Administrators Week:** Each year, for more than two decades, the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) has sponsored this week-long observance to celebrate the important role that administrators play by acting as a leader for the delivery of quality, resident-centered care and a supportive workplace environment. Click here to find out more.

**March 13-19 is Patient Safety Awareness Week:** Designed to promote the importance of being involved in one’s own health care, this national observance is organized each year by the National Patient Safety Organization (NPSF). Patient safety is a public health issue. One in 10 patients develops a health care acquired condition during hospitalization. This year, NPSF is using National Patient Safety Awareness Week to kick off its United for Patient Safety campaign, which will highlight and reinforce that all of us within the health care system have a role to play in keeping patients safe and free from harm. Click here for more.

**This month is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month:** Each March since 1987 the Special Needs Alliance (SNA) arranges National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to bring awareness to developmental disabilities and individuals with special needs. Take the time this month to learn about programs that provide career planning and jobs to the developmentally disabled so that they may participate in as well as contribute to society. For more information about this special observance, please visit www.specialneedsalliance.org.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**AHCA Overview of CMS Plans for Five Star**

*Tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m.,* AHCA is hosting a call to go over the plans CMS has for adding new measures to Nursing Home Compare and the Five-Star Rating System that will be announced next Thursday. There will also be ample time for asking questions.

To sign up for the call, click here.

**Congressional Briefing**

Save the Date for May 23-24!! Please join us in our nation’s capital to help lobby for long term care issues with the Illinois’ Congressional Delegation. The headquartered hotel will be the Renaissance Washington. Click here to register. It’s a great opportunity to hear what's happening on the Hill and meet with your Representatives. It's one that you don't want to miss!

**IHCA Public Policy Update**

**Long term Care Application Updates**

After an extended period, provider groups were able to sit down with the Department for an updated report on LTC applications and procedures. The Department of Human Services has experienced up to a 25 percent loss of their caseworker employees for application processing. The impending result is a 7 percent increase in those applications over 90 days. IHCA continues to work with the Department to streamline this heavily backlogged process. Please continue to reach out to Ashley Snavely if you have questions or problems arise within the process.
Application Reminders
Please only inquire about applications that are over 90 days. If you are not receiving feedback from the Department within their time frame, please feel free to send Ashley Snively the cases in question.

The redeterminations list that is sent out by DHS is a compilation of cases within their database. There may be at times residents that are up for redeterminations that may not be on this list. It would be best to use this list as a guide and not an absolute in cases up for redeterminations.

Please do not send multiple applications if the current application is still in progress. Many times facilities may not know if a family member has previously filled out an application, which is understandable. Be sure to ask family members upon admission if there have been any applications for Medicaid submitted. Multiple applications have only added to the backlog.

IHCA has agreed to assist the Macon County Hub in providing a list matching facilities to their corporation. This will help streamline the information flow and communications between the hub and both entities. Macon Co. will soon create a 30-day LTC update report to corporations on their facilities. If you are a corporation and have a specific point of contact you would like to use, please email Ashley Snively the contact information. This information could also be used to send out the REDE list to corporations.

Appeals
It has been confirmed in our latest meeting with the Department and the OIG that the authorized representative may request to phone into a hearing. This request is carried out upon receiving the appeals notification letter that is sent to the authorized representative. You must notify the Department within 10 days of the scheduled hearing. If there is trouble with an over the phone request, call 1-800-435-0774 or email DHS.BAH@Illinois.gov

In order to become an authorized representative in the appeals process, use the appeal authorized representative form. No chain is necessary if the client signs the appeal request form; but, the client then has to appoint a representative using the appeal request form, and that person, and only that person, is the representative.

If the client does not sign the appeal request form, there must be an authorization attached with the client’s signature and it must authorize a person to file an appeal. The application authorization form only authorizes the filing of applications, and by its own terms does not authorize appeals.

Income Changes
Please keep incomes changes separate from actual application determination inquirers. If you are in the MFO area, please email income change questions to DHS.MFOInfo@illinois.gov or Yolanda.lampkin-Diming@illinois.gov. Please list the resident’s name, TAN # and name of facility with the subject box reading “Income Change.” Please do not send out dates of birth or SS numbers.

The Macon county hub has officially designated 28 workers to the income change project. These workers will focus on income changes only. They are not to be used for status updates, as that will only take time away from processing the changes. Please inform your facilities that these caseworkers may be contacting them for information.

Attention Medicaid Providers
In compliance with the November 4, 2015 provider notice, all providers must register with the state’s new IMPACT system by March 15, 2016. This system is an update to the out of date MMIS system currently being used. Below are some helpful directions and steps on how to navigate through the revalidation process. If you need further assistance, please contact the IMPACT Help Desk by email: IMPACT.Help@Illinois.gov or phone: (877) 782-5565 Select option #1.

Users will need to register to use the IMPACT system: http://www.illinois.gov/hfs/impact/Documents/SingleSignOnProviders.pdf
Home Page: http://www.illinois.gov/hfs/impact/Pages/default.aspx
FAQs: http://www.illinois.gov/hfs/impact/Pages/faqs.aspx
IHCA Association Information

Save the Date for the 19th Annual Resources for Success!!
This year’s annual nursing conference, hosted by IHCA and LTCNA, will be held April 19 & 20 at the Wyndham City Centre in Springfield. Topics will include an overview of the change to the requirements of participation; how to conduct a facility assessment, identifying areas of concern and put a plan in place to correct; ethics; infection control and antibiotic stewardship. Click here to view the brochure and registration form.

Don’t forget about the Resources for Success Expo!! Want to have access to long term care nurses, DONs, administrators and other decision makers? The Resources for Success Expo allows you to do just that. Space is limited for this two-day event, so reserve your space today! Click here to view the expo prospectus.

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.

The Prospectus for the 66th Annual IHCA Expo is Available 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.

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
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?

IHCA is proud of our diverse membership and all of your successes and accomplishments. We are always looking for members to feature, here and in our other publications (like LTC Today magazine!). Any IHCA member can be featured in this section—facility, association member company, corporate office—all are welcome!

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

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