Submit Your Staff & Specialty Award Nominations Today!

**Nominations:** IHCA has revamped our Annual Awards Program—now the IHCA Excellence Awards—and we hope you’ll like what we’ve done! This year, we’ve moved up the time line for our Staff & Specialty Awards. Nominations are due in just two weeks—April 14, 2017! Winners will be announced during National Nursing Home Week, May 14-20. For more about the program, please visit [www.ihca.com/awards](http://www.ihca.com/awards).

To submit your nominations online for the categories listed below, click here. To download the printable nomination forms, click here. Some of the Rules & Procedures have changed, so please read them carefully before submitting your nominations.

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**Staff Awards**
- Administrator
- Assisted/Supportive Living Director
- Administrator’s Choice Award
- Social Service Professional
- Activity Professional
- Business Office Professional
- Housekeeping Professional
- Food Service/Dietary Professional
- Environmental Services Professional

**Specialty Awards**
- Associate Member
- Community Partnership
- Innovative Program
- Media Event
- Communication
- Photograph
- Volunteer Award

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**Awards Task Force:** IHCA is always looking for members to join our Awards Task Force. Task force members choose the winners of the Staff & Specialty awards, and this year will also choose the winners of the new Long Term Care Center award. Choosing the winners is a blind process, so all nomination forms are reviewed by IHCA staff upon receipt and any pertinent information that may reveal who they are or what center they are from is blacked out before being sent to the task for members for their input. If you are interested in serving on the Awards Task Force, please contact Ashley Caldwell at acaldwell@ihca.com.

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CMS Urges More Provider Diligence on PBJ Data

CMS announced last week that they are encouraging providers to submit their payroll based journaling (PBJ) data for the next deadline with plenty of time to spare. According to CMS officials, providers have until May 15 to submit data for the previous fiscal quarter (January 1 through March 31, 2017) and it would be best if they don’t wait until the last minute so that they can see if there are any errors or corrections that need to be made. CMS officials also noted that while provider compliance with PBJ has not been added to their Nursing Home Compare 5-star rating, they are adding a badge to the website that will show whether or not a facility has submitted staffing data. For more information on this, [click here](#) to read the full story from McKnight’s.

Helping Staff Increase Familiarity with Regulations

There’s a lot of information packed into the new Requirements of Participation (RoP) rule. Since Phase 1 of the RoP went into effect in November, this rule is very much a reality in long term care centers today. In a recent guest column for McKnight’s, Nora Wellington, MBA, LNHA, Certified INTERACT Champion, discussed one of the public comments from the rule that caught her eye:

Comments: “A number of commenters responded to our request for comments in ways that suggest misunderstandings of either current requirements, or the proposed requirements. Notable misconceptions include: the belief that allowing residents to choose their own physicians will be something new; RN on the interdisciplinary team will be new; concerns that health and safety activities in LTC will have to be recreated; belief that complete care plan would need to be developed within 48 hours of admission; impression that new requirement are simply duplicates of the old; some commenters expressed concerns that CMS was unreasonably focused on regulating LTC facilities and not, other providers; and concerns that LTC facilities were “the most regulated industry in America”, and that “the nuclear industry is less regulated” than the LTC facility industry.”

Response: “We (CMS) recognize that the proposed rule and this final rule are large, detailed documents, and that many individuals relied on summaries to learn about the proposed requirements. We understand that working professionals and family caregivers can be very busy, but we are concerned by some of these misinterpretations. Most of the misconceptions fell into three categories: Unfamiliarity with the existing requirements, misunderstanding of the proposed requirements, or confusion about which facilities must meet the LTC requirements. The comments displaying unfamiliarity with the existing requirements are troubling to us. ….”

According to Wellington, “CMS' views about the unfamiliarity of existing and proposed requirements by hard working professionals and family caregivers, and the fact that they are troubled by it, is a point well taken. All skilled nursing facilities and nursing facilities already have or should have staff development department or structure in place. Based on my experience and observations through the years, as a hands-on nursing home administrator, I can say that there are quite a few factors that impact the commitment and dedication to training, which in turn impact the level of staffs' familiarity with regulations, which also impacts quality. Facilities have the tools to get the job done, and get their staffs adequately trained, so they become familiar with the regulations that guide the care and service they provide.”

Wellington went on to offer a number of useful tips to assist administrators and staff development directors to help their staff become more familiar with long term care requirements. To view these tips, [click here](#) to view her column.

Long Term Care Nursing Forms New Ties with Academia Via Scholarships

According to a recent article ([clicky here](#)) by Provider Magazine, a new organization, the Long Term Care (LTC) Nursing Education Foundation, is in the business of funding scholarships and academic research grants to boost the number of nurses furthering their careers in the long term care setting as they seek higher educational opportunities.

“This program is important because LTC has not traditionally had the connections to academic environments that exist in other community-based settings,” explained Diane Carter, RN, president and chief executive officer of the American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination (AANAC). “Scholarships and research strengthen those connections.”
According to Carter, in order to determine if the new foundation achieves its goals, the proof will be in the number of LTC nurses obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Master of Science in Nursing or a PhD in Nursing, while continuing to contribute to the care of those who live in long-term care centers.

“We also want to see nursing and policy research that assists us with broadening the body of knowledge, which is evidence-based to support important movements toward best practices that support improved care and outcomes for LTC residents,” she said.

*Provider* noted that the new foundation will get busy on its awards starting in May when it plans to name the recipient of its Cheryl M. Thomas Scholarship, which provides the winner $5,000 for the pursuit of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

As an organization, Carter stated, AANAC aids nurse assessment coordinators and directors of nursing services with the most current information they need to excel at their work. This information includes daily postings of news, regulatory changes, and evidence-based clinical practice information, as well as research to cultivate expert care and outcomes for residents. Visit [www.aanac.org](http://www.aanac.org) for more information.

**FDA Approves Drug to Treat Parkinson’s Disease**

Earlier this week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced that they had approved Xadago (safinamide) tablets as an add-on treatment for patients with Parkinson’s disease who are currently taking levodopa/carbidopa and experiencing “off” episodes. An “off” episode is a time when a patient’s medications are not working well, causing an increase in Parkinson’s symptoms, such as tremor and difficulty walking.

“Parkinson’s is a relentless disease without a cure,” stated Eric Bastings, M.D., deputy director of the Division of Neurology Products in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research in the press release. “We are committed to helping make additional treatments for Parkinson’s disease available to patients.”

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), approximately 50,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease each year and more than one million Americans are currently living with the condition. The neurological disorder typically occurs in people over age 60, though it can occur earlier, when cells in the brain that produce a chemical called dopamine become impaired or die. Dopamine helps transmit signals between the areas of the brain that produce smooth, purposeful movement—such as eating, writing, and shaving. Early symptoms of the disease are subtle and occur gradually. In some people, Parkinson’s disease progresses more quickly than in others.

Safinamide, a selective monoamine oxidase B inhibitor, which reduces the degradation of dopamine, has been in the works for quite some time. After the drug failed a large phase III trial in 2010, the drugmaker—Newron Pharmaceuticals—went back to the drawing board. Last spring, they received a complete response letter from the FDA requesting more information on the potential effects on abuse liability and dependence/withdrawal. The drug's approval by the FDA finally came after Newron resubmitted the drug’s NDA.

For more information, click here to read the full article from MedpageToday.

**Clinic Blood Tests Can Miss ‘Masked’ Hypertension**

A recent study by researchers at Stony Brook University in New York has shown that monitoring blood pressure around the clock during regular daily activity can reveal undetected high blood pressure in a significant number of otherwise healthy people.

“These findings debunk the widely held belief that ambulatory blood pressure is usually lower than clinic blood pressure,” stated lead author Joseph E. Schwartz, professor of psychiatry and sociology at Stony Brook University and lecturer at Columbia University in a recent article for Futurity.org.

According to the article, “white coat hypertension’ refers to having higher blood pressure readings at the doctor’s office than elsewhere,” whereas “masked hypertension’ is normal
blood pressure at the doctor’s, but high readings otherwise.”

Patients can wear a blood pressure cuff on one arm, which is attached to a small portable device, to monitor their blood pressure readings for 24 hours in order to see if they have masked hypertension. These types of readings tend to be a better indicator of future heart disease than clinical blood pressure readings alone.

For the study, researchers compared clinic blood pressure measurements to ambulatory blood pressure monitoring in working, middle-aged participants between 2005 and 2012. Participants had three blood pressure readings taken during three clinic visits and also completed one 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure recording with readings taken approximately every 30 minutes.

The study found:

- 15.7 percent of participants with normal clinic blood pressure had masked hypertension based on ambulatory monitoring; this was more common in men than women and in those with prehypertension (also known as borderline hypertension).
- Younger, normal-weight participants were more likely than older, overweight participants to have ambulatory blood pressure readings higher than their clinic readings.

“It is important for health care providers to know that there is a systematic tendency for ambulatory blood pressure to exceed clinic blood pressure in healthy, untreated individuals evaluated for hypertension during well-patient visits,” said Schwartz. “Our study’s results may not apply to those who have previously been diagnosed as having hypertension or are already being treated for hypertension.”

For more about this study, **click here**.

**April 2017 Observances**

**April 7 is World Health Day:** World Health Day, celebrated each April 7 to mark the anniversary of the founding of WHO, provides us with a unique opportunity to spread awareness and mobilize action around a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world. The theme of the 2017 World Health Day campaign is depression. Depression affects people of all ages, from all walks of life, in all countries, yet it can be prevented and treated. For more information, visit www.who.int.

**April 16 is National Healthcare Decisions Day:** National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) was created to inspire, educate and empower providers and the public about the importance of advance care planning. This year marks the 10th anniversary of NHDD! To celebrate this occasion, this year’s observance will be a week-long event. To find out more, visit www.nhdd.org.

**April 3-9 is National Public Health Week:** Each year, the American Public Health Association (APHA) organizes National Public Health Week (NPHW) to recognize the contributions and importance of public health. Join APHA this year in celebrating NPHW and become part of a growing movement to create the healthiest nation in one generation. APHA is celebrating the power of prevention, advocating for healthy and fair policies, sharing strategies for successful partnerships and championing the role of a strong public health system. Visit the NPHW website for more information.

**April is National Parkinson’s Awareness Month:** Each April, the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation organizes National Parkinson’s Awareness Month to educate the public on the facts of Parkinson’s disease. Nearly one million Americans live with Parkinson’s, a chronic and progressive neurological disorder for which there is not yet a cure. For more information, visit www.pdf.org/parkinson_awareness.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**2017-2018 AHCA Elections and Solicitation for Candidates**
The 2017-2018 election cycle has officially opened for AHCA members in good standing interested in running for the AHCA Board of Governors. The AHCA elections are for three officer positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer),
one Independent Owner Representative, one Regional Multi-facility Representative and two At-large Representatives. AHCA members interested in running for an AHCA Board position may obtain the necessary candidacy materials online. Applicants must complete and electronically submit the AHCA candidacy materials by close of business on May 22, 2017. Candidates will submit completed materials via email to Christy Sharp.

The AHCA elections will take place during the second Council of States meeting at the AHCA/NCAL 68th Annual Convention & Expo, October 15 - 18 in Las Vegas, NV. Once the application phase has ended, the AHCA/NCAL Credentialing Committee will hold an in-person meeting to conduct a certification process for each candidate. Once certification occurs, AHCA will announce the slate of candidates to the membership. If you have further questions, contact Christy Sharp.

Registration is Now Open for the AHCA/NCAL Congressional Briefing
Join AHCA/NCAL in Washington, D.C. on June 5 & 6 as they take your concerns directly to the Hill. You’ll be able to hear the latest on what’s happening in Washington, meet with your Members of Congress IN PERSON and share ideas with you colleagues. You’ll also enjoy terrific guest speakers. This year’s keynote is Fox New Channel Anchor Bret Baier. Plus, many more special guests will drop by. Check CB.ahcancal.org over the next few weeks to see updates on the events happening during the briefing. The conference registration fee is complimentary to AHCA/NCAL Members and AHCA/NCAL Associate Business Members, and their spouses, and is accepted on a first-come basis.

Register now and make your hotel reservations. Advanced Registration Deadline: May 8, 2017

National Nursing Home Week
Governor Rauner signed a proclamation last week (click here) proclaiming May 14-20 as National Nursing Home Week® (NNHW). This year’s theme is The Spirit of America! This is all about your center’s spirit and sense of community for residents, volunteers and staff alike. Acts of kindness, generosity and compassion from proud veterans, immigrants and hardworking people of different faiths fill every center. Don’t miss the opportunity to celebrate! Order products online or by phone, 800-321-0343. For planning resources and other information check out the official NNHW website.

IHCA PAC Information

2017 IHCA PAC Events
The IHCA and CDDACS PAC have a number of fundraising events every year to promote our political efforts and raise dollars. Please mark your calendar for the following 2017 IHCA PAC events:

Southern Illinois Golf Outing – April 21 – Sign Up Today!
IHCA’s 3rd Annual Southern Illinois Golf Outing will be held at Stonewolf Golf Course in Fairview Heights, IL (near St. Louis). Last year’s outing had 34 participants and took place on a beautiful spring day in Southern Illinois. The 2017 outing will be at the same venue, and prices include greens fees, golf, lunch, drinks and a reception after the outing. $100/$375 per foursome. Click here to view the registration form for more information. Thank you to ONR for once again being a title sponsor for this event!

IHCA PAC Annual Baseball Outing - July 21
An event that quickly became a crowd favorite, 2017 marks the 5th annual IHCA PAC baseball outing at Wrigley Field in Chicago. Per tradition, we will be hosting our event at one of the famous Wrigley Rooftops, 3619 Sheffield Ave., for a contest between the World Champion Chicago Cubs and perennial favorite St. Louis Cardinals. Pricing is all inclusive. $250/per person.

Fall Golf Outing - September 11
For the flagship IHCA PAC event, we return once again to beautiful WeaverRidge in Peoria for our fall golf outing. Consistently ranked one of the best courses in the Midwest, this is a round of golf not to be missed. Pricing includes greens fees, golf, lunch and drinks. $150 per person/$575 per foursome.
Oksnevad 5K - September 12
The fastest growing IHCA PAC event, the Oksnevad 5K returns for its fifth year in 2017. For the third time, we will be running on the Peoria Riverwalk. Pricing includes registration, runner’s goody bag and a sponsor t-shirt. $30 per person.

Please contact Kristin DiCenso at kdicenso@ihca.com or Matt Hartman mhartman@ihca.com to register or sponsor any of these events.

IHCA Association Information

Have You Reserved Your Booth for the Annual Convention & Expo in September??
Now’s the time to get on board! The 67th Annual IHCA Convention & Expo, September 11-14, 2017, is a great way to connect with long term care owners, managers, administrators, nurses and more!

If you're interested in exhibiting, visit the exhibitor page on our website or click here to view the Convention Expo Prospectus.

LTCNA Simulation Education for Nurses! Now Offering A La Carte Sessions!
LTCNA is now offering a la carte competency training sessions with their simulation mannequin, Geri Manikin! Get your nurses the training they need right in your center! The cost will be dependent on the amount of time spent in the center. Charter Memberships are also still available for centers. The fee for the membership is $2,000 and the center will receive 24 hours (4 6-hour days) of simulation time over the course of the year. For more information contact Debbie Jackson at djackson@ihca.com or 800-252-8988.

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!