Happy National Nurses Week!

To all of our long term care nurses—thank you for everything that you do!!

The American Nurses Association (ANA) has designated this year as the “Year of the Healthy Nurse.” The 2017 theme, “Nursing: the Balance of Mind, Body, and Spirit” is all about celebrating nurses who lead the charge for health and wellness. Be sure to take the time this week to celebrate the dedicated and hard-working nurses who help care for your residents each day. Click here to learn more.

Next Week is National Nursing Home Week!

Next week, long term care centers across the country will be celebrating National Nursing Home Week® (NNHW) 2017! The theme for this year is The Spirit of America—a theme that honors the diversity of long term care communities throughout the United States. This year 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. For planning resources and other information check out the official NNHW website.

Click here to view the proclamation signed by Governor Rauner declaring May 14-20 as National Nursing Home Week® in Illinois. How will you be celebrating next week? If you have any photos or stories about your center’s NNHW celebrations, we’d love for you to share them! Contact Ashley Caldwell (acaldwell@ihca.com) for more information.

Nomination Forms for the 2017 LTCNA Nursing Awards are Now Available!

Each year, the Long Term Care Nurses Association recognizes the outstanding work done by nursing staff in long term care centers every day by organizing the Annual LTCNA Nursing Awards. The Nursing Awards are presented at Ovations: A Celebration of Long Term Care Nurses at the annual IHCA Convention & Expo. Honor your exceptional
CNAs, Nurses, MDS Coordinators and DONs by nominating them for an LTCNA Nursing Award today! **Click here** for more information. **Nominations must be received by Friday, June 16, 2017 to be considered.** You may submit your nominations online by **clicking here** or you can access the printable PDF nomination forms **here.** **“Please note that a letter of recommendation and a digital photo of the nominee is required with every nomination. Please be sure you have all of your materials ready before submitting your nominations.”**

**New for 2017—The IHCA Excellence Award for Long Term Care Centers**

IHCA has revamped our awards program to offer our members more ways to recognize the hard work and dedication going on inside their centers each day. This year, we have introduced the IHCA Excellence Award for Long Term Care Centers so that members can be recognized for the care provided in their centers, the programs and processes put in place and the outcomes accomplished by the entire team, rather than one individual staff member or one particular program like the Staff & Specialty Awards.

Questions on the nomination form focus on qualifiable information about the care provided—census trends, antipsychotic usage, rehospitalization stats and more. Tell us about your facility, programs, staff, residents and more and get the recognition you deserve! Nominate your center today! For more information, **click here.** Nominations can be **submitted online** or by filling out the **printable forms** and sending them to the IHCA office via mail, email or fax. Some of the questions require lengthy answers so you may want to review the forms before filling out your nomination.

**The deadline to submit your nomination is Friday, June 16, 2017.**

**Missing PBJ Deadlines Will Lead to ‘Suppressed' Star Ratings—CMS**

In a SNF Open Door Forum held last week CMS officials “strongly encouraged” providers to submit Payroll Based Journaling staffing data throughout the quarter and not wait until the last minute before a deadline. Those providers who fail to submit their data on time and miss two PBJ deadlines in a row will face “suppressed” Five-Star ratings.

“Beginning with the next submission deadline providers who have not submitted any data for two consecutive deadlines will have their overall star and staffing ratings suppressed,” CMS official Lorelei Kahn said on the call, according to one attendee.

CMS also reminded providers that PBJ data must be submitted successfully to be considered on time. This data will be used to calculate the staffing data for the Five-Star rating system starting in 2018. At present this data is not used in calculating the Five-Star ratings, but a badge does appear on each provider’s Nursing Home Compare page to show whether or not the facility has submitted staffing data.

CMS is still finalizing how the staffing data will be used to calculate the ratings—which quarters’ data they will be using, whether it will only be nursing time or other disciplines as well, etc. There are still details to work out, but right now the agency is focusing mostly on “every facility submitting complete and accurate data.”

For more on this topic, **click here** to read the full article from **McKnight’s.**

**Glaucoma Biomarker May Predict Speed of Vision Loss**

Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness today, affecting more than 60 million people worldwide. The disease often begins silently, with peripheral vision loss that occurs so gradually that it can go unnoticed. Over time, central vision becomes affected. Recently, a biomarker was found that could be a way to monitor how fast glaucoma is progressing, as well as the effectiveness of treatment.

“There hasn’t been a reliable way to predict which patients with glaucoma have a high risk of rapid vision loss,” said principal investigator Rajendra S. Apte, professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, MO.
“But we’ve identified a biomarker that seems to correlate with disease severity in patients, and what that marker is measuring is stress to the cells rather than cell death. Other glaucoma tests are measuring cell death, which is not reversible, but if we can identify when cells are under stress, then there’s the potential to save those cells to preserve vision.”

Many glaucoma patients start receiving treatment when their eye doctors notice they have elevated pressure in the eye. Those treatments, such as eye drops, are directed at lowering pressure in the eye. Currently, all treatments prescribed for glaucoma are aimed at lowering the eye pressure to help reduce ganglion cell (the cells destroyed in glaucoma) loss. Unfortunately, these treatments may not always protect the ganglion cells in the retina, which leads to vision loss.

In order to track vision loss due to glaucoma, specialists test patients to see how their visual field changes. Patients are asked to push a button each time they see a blinking light. As vision loss occurs, patients see fewer blinking lights in the periphery of the visual field. However, this test may not be the most reliable way to judge vision loss in seniors. Some older individuals don’t do as well on the visual field test for reasons unrelated to what’s going on with their eyes.

Researchers at Washington University were lucky enough to identify a gene that seems to be a marker of stress to ganglion cells in the retinas of mice, rats and humans, according to Norimitsu Ban, an ophthalmologist and postdoctoral research associate in Apte’s lab. By studying mouse models of glaucoma, they identified a molecule in the eye called growth differentiation factor 15 (GDF15), noting that levels of the molecule increased as the animals aged and developed optic nerve damage.

As they moved forward with this research, they repeated the experiments in rats, and then further in patients undergoing eye surgery to treat glaucoma and found that those with glaucoma also had elevated GDF15 in the fluid of their eyes.

“That was exciting because comparing the fluid from patients without glaucoma to those with glaucoma, the GDF15 biomarker was significantly elevated in the glaucoma patients,’ said Apte. ‘We also found that higher levels of the molecule were associated with worse functional outcomes, so this biomarker seems to correlate with disease severity.’

Apte would now like to do further research to sample fluid from the eye over a period of time and see how glaucoma progression correlates with the levels of the GDF15 biomarker. “We’d also like to learn whether levels of GDF15 change after treatment,” he stated, “a particularly important question as we try to develop therapies that preserve vision more effectively in these patients.”

To find out more about this new development, click here to read the full article from Futurity.org.

**Training SNF Staff to Recognize Unmet Needs Helps Lower Antipsychotic Use—Study**

According to a recent study by researchers at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, a training program that teaches long term care staff to better understand cognitively impaired residents' behavior may help reduce the use of antipsychotic medications within their centers.

The research team focused on assessing the impact that a specific training program—OASIS—could have on LTC centers' off-label antipsychotic usage. OASIS was developed by the Massachusetts Senior Care Association and the Massachusetts Department of Health. It is a communications-focused program that helps workers, like nursing assistants, nurses and dietary staff identify challenging resident behaviors by concentrating on unmet resident needs ranging from physiological (i.e. food, comfort, safety, etc.) to social.

The OASIS program asks nursing staff to create care plans that include what residents are capable of, rather than what they cannot do, noted lead researcher Jennifer Tija, MD, MSCE, associate professor of quantitative health sciences. The OASIS curriculum and training equips frontline nursing home staff with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the needs of residents with dementia using non-pharmacologic approaches rather than medication. The pilot program began in 2011 with only 11 nursing facilities. Then, from 2012 to 2016, staff from more than 360 centers participated in one or more of three additional rounds of OASIS training.
For the study, Tija and her fellow researchers examined the rate of off-label antipsychotic use in 93 Massachusetts nursing homes enrolled in the program from 2011 to 2013, and compared the data to information from 831 nursing homes in Massachusetts and New York who were not using that program, (though some were using a different reduction program). Among OASIS facilities, the prevalence of antipsychotic prescriptions was cut from 34 to 27 percent after nine months. At the comparative facilities, the prevalence of those drugs was cut from 23 to 19 percent. No increases in other psychotropic medicine or behavioral disturbances were observed. However, the reductions didn't continue during the post-program maintenance phase, according to the research team.

“This is the largest study to show that it is possible to reduce antipsychotic use in the nursing home population," said Tija. “This intervention focused on treating the residents as human beings with needs, not as patients with problems. We don’t medicate babies when they cry or act out, because we assume that they have a need that we need to address. However, when people with dementia are unable to communicate, the current approach medicates them when they have undesirable behaviors.”

Click here for more information.

May 2017 Observances

May is Older Americans Month: Starting in 1963, May has been set aside to celebrate the vitality of older Americans, and what they contribute to their communities. This year, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) designed the theme, Age Out Loud, to give aging a new voice—one that reflects what today's older adults have to say. This theme shines a light on many important trends. More than ever before, older Americans are working longer, trying new things, and engaging in their communities. To find out more, click here.

May is Healthy Vision Month: Created to elevate the importance of healthy vision and make it a priority in the U.S., Healthy Vision Month is organized each year by the National Eye Institute. Eye health is especially important for women, who make up two-thirds of all people living with blindness or visual impairment from diseases like age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataract. For more information about Healthy Vision Month, or what you can do to spread the awareness of how important eye health really is, visit www.nei.nih.gov.

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month: Each May, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) organizes Better Hearing & Speech Month (BHSM) to provide the opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and role of ASHA members in providing life-altering treatment. This year’s BHSM theme is “Communication: The Key to Connection.” For more information, click here.

AHCA/NCAL Information

Registration for the 68th Annual AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo in Las Vegas is Now Open
The excitement surrounding this outstanding event has been building for several months, and the time is now! Register today! Join AHCA/NCAL at the Mandalay Bay, October 15-18, for the event that promises to stack the chips in your favor. They have a great line up of speakers, networking events, plus a two-day Expo! Click here for more information.

If you are interested in attending, IHCA will be providing several AHCA/NCAL Convention scholarships that will help cover the cost of registration, transportation, lodging, etc. of up to $1,500 per scholarship winner. Click here for more information and to download the application.

2017-2018 AHCA Elections and Solicitation for Candidates
Just over a week left to submit your candidacy materials to run for a position on the AHCA Board of Governors. The 2017-2018 election is open for AHCA members in good standing. The positions up for election are: 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. To submit completed materials or if you have any questions contact Christy Sharp.
Register Today 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. Check CB.ahcancal.org for more information. 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.

National Assisted Living Week
The National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) revealed yesterday that “Family is Forever” is this year’s theme for National Assisted Living Week®. The annual, national observance provides a unique opportunity for residents, their loved ones, staff, volunteers, and surrounding communities to celebrate the individuals served in assisted living and learn more about this sector of long term care. For more info about NALW, click here.

IHCA PAC Information

2017 IHCA PAC Events
The IHCA and CDDACS PAC have several other fundraising events this year to promote our political efforts and raise dollars. Please mark your calendar for the following 2017 IHCA PAC events:

*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 Information

*IHCA Excellence Awards – Staff & Specialty*
The IHCA Staff & Specialty Award Winners will be announced next week during National Nursing Home Week. Stay tuned to the IHCA website, social media sites and more for additional information! For now, click here to view a full list of nominees for the 2017 Staff & Specialty Awards.

*IHCA Member Surveys*
Just one week left to submit your IHCA member surveys! IHCA is continuously looking for ways to improve our customer service. In an effort to make better our association and provide more value for your membership dollar, we are conducting membership satisfaction surveys (for IHCA Member Centers and Associate Members) to gather your input. You should have received an email recently from IHCA Preferred Vendor NRC Health (surveys@myinnerview.com) that contained a link for you to complete the survey. I hope you’ll take the few minutes to complete it—**deadline to participate is May 19, 2017**.

Thank you for your continued membership and support!
Maitland-Warner Nursing Scholarship Applications NOW Available
Do you know a hard working nurse that could use some scholarship dollars to advance their education? The Maitland-Warner Long Term Care Nurses Scholarship fund is now accepting applications for scholarships for nurses. They will award scholarships of up to $1,000 for the 2017-2018 school year.

To qualify, an applicant:
- Must have completed the prerequisites for and be accepted into an RN or LPN program on a full-time or part-time basis.
- Must be working in an assisted living or long term care facility (either full-time or part-time).
- Must provide proof of satisfactory completion of the semester for which the scholarship is awarded.
- Should be willing to work as an RN or LPN in a long term care facility/program.

Click here to submit your application online (all items must be attached before you can submit) or Click here to download the printable application forms.

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!