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Last Chance to Submit Session Proposals for 68th Annual Convention & Expo!

The Call for Presentations is staying open a few more days, so if you haven’t submitted your session proposals, this is your last chance!! Proposals must be received by next Friday, February 9 to be considered.

This year’s event is scheduled for September 10-13, 2018 and will once again be held in Peoria. We are looking for sessions on important long term care topics that will keep attendees engaged while earning their continuing education credits. To see a list of suggested topics, click here. To submit your proposals online, click here.

Nominations for the IHCA Excellence Awards-Staff & Specialty Now Being Accepted!

Recognizing your staff members and volunteers who have proven to be an invaluable resource to your center’s team is an excellent way to show your appreciation. The IHCA Staff & Specialty Awards gives members the chance to do that. Additionally, you can submit nominations for your center’s innovative programs, communications and community outreach projects. So, if you have an outstanding housekeeping staffer, activity professional or business office employee, or an innovative program or inspiring photograph you would like to see recognized—submit your nomination today!! Click on the following link to download and print nomination forms to be submitted via fax or email, or submit your nominations online!

**Please Note:** Our IHCA Excellence Awards program has two distinct parts—the Staff & Specialty Awards and the Award for Long Term Care Centers. Currently, we are only accepting nominations for the Staff & Specialty Awards. This does not include the LTCNA Nursing Awards. More information regarding the Long Term Care Centers Award and the LTCNA Nursing Awards will be released as it becomes available.

If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Caldwell (acaldwell@ihca.com).
Alzheimer’s Association Issues New Guidance for Dementia in Nursing Homes

The Alzheimer’s Association recently published new recommendations meant to shape dementia care practice at nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other long term care providers. They have outlined 56 recommendations across 10 different content areas, which were developed, according to the association, to better define quality care across all care settings and throughout the disease course.

Among the new guidelines are tips for community-based and residential care providers on detecting, diagnosing and medically managing patients — topic areas typically reserved for clinicians. Recommendations in these two areas are written specifically for non-physician care providers and address what these providers can do to help with these important aspects of holistic, person-centered dementia care.

“Detection and diagnosis, and medical management are critical, vital areas of care,” said Sam Fazio, Ph.D., lead author and Director of Quality Care and Psychosocial Research, Alzheimer’s Association, in a press release. “While clinicians must continue to take a lead role in these areas, there are important contributions dementia care providers can make to improve outcomes in these areas…. Having both groups focus on these critical areas will result in better care for people struggling with this disease.”

Other covered topics include: assessment and care planning; information, education and support; ongoing care for behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia; support of activities in daily living; staffing; supportive and therapeutic environments; transitions and coordination of services.

To find out more, click here to read the full article from McKnight’s or check out the full recommendations online.

How a Bad Flu Season Can Affect Skilled Nursing Admissions, Staffing

This year the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting widespread cases of the flu in 49 states. This is the first time this has happened in more than a decade—and it could have an effect on long term care providers’ bottom lines.

Making matters worse, the most common form of the flu this season — influenza A, H3N2 — is a particularly strong strain of the influenza virus, according to CDC Director Brenda Fitzgerald.

“These viruses are often linked to more severe illness, especially among children and people age 65 and older,” Fitzgerald said during a recent press briefing. “When H3 viruses are predominant, we tend to have a worse flu season with more hospitalizations and more deaths.”

This is certainly the case this year, as the CDC is seeing a “very rapid increase” in the number of people coming in to see their doctors or health care professionals among the roughly 2,000 providers who supply the agency with data, according to Jernigan.

Operational strains
For skilled nursing facilities, a particularly bad flu season can have an immense impact on business metrics, according to Linda Behan, director of infection prevention and control at Kennett Square, Pa.-based Genesis HealthCare (NYSE: GEN).

“Certainly, when you have more admissions, it always helps revenue, [but] there’s also the downside — where sometimes, if you should have a very bad flu outbreak in your center, in order to control the spread of the illness, we’ll actually restrict admissions,” Behan told Skilled Nursing News.

In addition to restricting admissions, a flu outbreak within a SNF can also put a strain on its day-to-day resources, explained Rob Poyas, vice president of sales and marketing at Five Star.

“Our staff is having to work harder, [so] you also run the risk of your staff getting sick,” Poyas told SNN. “We have to keep the staffing up so you’re going to get some overtime costs in with it; a lot of times we have to bring in extra staff.”
Staffing and pharmacy costs can go up during a flu outbreak in a SNF, but so can non-medical expenditures, Poyas added.

**An elementary approach**
To curb the operational and financial strains associated with a flu outbreak, preventing the spread of the virus is key, according to the experts.

Following the guidelines established by the CDC is a good place to start. Having employees who opted out of getting the flu vaccine wear face masks and keeping the staff contained can also help prevent the spread of the virus.

“One good best practice is we keep the same staff working with the same residents, so we try to eliminate floaters,” said Rob Poyas of Five Star Senior Living. “[Instead of staff] going out to the whole community you try and isolate certain key members with certain groups of residents.”

“From the care side, you have to step up the monitoring for all the residents just so that you look for changing health conditions,” he said. “And then, it’s reporting everything to the local health department and then seek guidance and best practices from them. Our whole goal is to be collaborative so we can care for our residents to the best of our abilities.”

For more detailed information on this, [click here](#) to read the full article from Skilled Nursing News.

**Veterans Affairs Plans to Borrow from the CMS Fraud-Prevention Playbook**

CMS will share its best fraud prevention tactics used for nursing homes and other providers with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the agencies announced last week, in a joint effort to sniff out waste and abuse.

Officials with the nation’s two largest public-private health care payment organizations plan to build on CMS integrity programs to weed out fraud related to veterans’ care using shared data, analytical tools and best practices.

CMS estimates its activities saved Medicare $17 billion in fiscal 2015, with other HHS tactics — including law enforcement and civil cases — contributing to even greater savings.

The VA plans to implement analytics advancements made by CMS, particularly technology, statistics and data analysis, to close gaps in its own claims payment process.

“We have a special obligation to keep America’s promise to those who have served our country and ensure that Veterans receive high-quality and accessible healthcare,” CMS Administrator Seema Verma said in a statement. “CMS is sharing lessons learned and expertise to eliminate these abuses of the public trust.”

In April, the VA also will invite industry experts to demonstrate commercial capabilities for detecting and preventing fraud, waste and abuse and recovering improper payments.

“The VA-HHS alliance represents the latest example of VA’s commitment to find partners to assist with identifying new and innovative ways to seek out fraud, waste and abuse and ensure every tax dollar given to VA supports Veterans,” said VA Secretary David J. Shulkin, M.D.

[Click here](#) to read the full article from McKnight’s.

**HealthCap Can Help You!**

HealthCap is endorsed by AHCA/NCAL and is the premier program solely dedicated to providing liability insurance to senior care communities. One of the reasons HealthCap gets such great results is its focus on quality care as the foundation of good risk management practices. HealthCap clients have the fewest liability claims in the industry and HealthCap settles claims for half the industry average.
HealthCap is owned and governed by the senior care providers insured by HealthCap. AHCA/NCAL members get a bonus advantage by always receiving a 10 percent discount on their HealthCap premiums.

HealthCap clients also receive:
- Risk management services that make a financial difference
- An annual on-site risk consult
- Unlimited telephone support
- Accredited in-service education

For more information about HealthCap, email Stephanie Hale at stephanie.hale@chelsearhone.com or call (877) 855-4227.

**February 2018 Observances**

**February 2 is National Wear Red Day:** Heart Disease is the #1 killer for women in the U.S. Each year, the American Heart Association hosts this national day of observance in order to spread awareness cardiovascular disease. Show your commitment for ending heart disease by wearing red tomorrow!! Visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org) for more information.

**February 5-9 is Pride in Foodservice Week:** This recognition week, hosted by the Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP) applauds nutrition and foodservice professionals and other members of the dietary team for their hard work and dedication on the job. Celebrating its 27th year, Pride in Foodservice Week will be celebrated in facilities across the country in various inventive ways. How will you celebrate your dietary department? Click here for more.

**February 11-17 is National Cardiac Rehabilitation Week:** Celebrate National Cardiac Rehabilitation Week and draw attention to the role of cardiac rehabilitation in reducing the potentially devastating effects of heart disease. This observance was created to celebrate the contribution that cardiovascular professionals make to health care and their role in reducing the potentially devastating effects of heart disease. The week is also a great opportunity to recognize your team members for their contributions. Visit [www.aacvpr.org](http://www.aacvpr.org) for more information.

**February is National Senior Independence Month:** This special observance was established to help seniors remain in control of their daily lives. It encourages seniors to take the opportunity to evaluate their current living situation, and to determine whether or not adjustments could be made in order to create a better lifestyle. Help encourage your seniors to be independent and to improve their daily routines—minor adjustments could result in major improvements!

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**Use Gero Nurse Prep to Increase Competency in Geriatric Nursing Care**

AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep does much more than just prepare RNs to take the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) board certification exam in gerontological nursing. It increases experienced RNs’ knowledge of gerontological nursing practice. Gero Nurse Prep students see a whopping 24 percent average increase on their pre- and post-test scores. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep or check out the [course preview](#) to get a quick view of this engaging on-line curriculum designed to increase gerontological nursing knowledge and help RNs pass the ANCC exam.

**National Skilled Nursing Care Week 2018**

Beginning in 2018, National Nursing Home Week will now be known as National Skilled Nursing Care Week (NSNCW). This year’s observance will be held May 13-19, so Save the Date!! The theme this year will be “Celebrating Life’s Stories,” which serves as a tribute to life’s most significant events, relationships and experiences, all of which shape the unique perspectives of residents, families, staff and volunteers in long term and post-acute care. For more information, [click here](#).
Registration for the 2018 AHCA/NCAL Quality Summit is Now Open! – Housing Deadline February 9
Join your fellow long term and post-acute care professionals March 12-14, 2017 in New Orleans for a variety of educational sessions, association updates and networking opportunities! Deadline to Register is March 2, 2018. Click here for more. Make your hotel reservations now! The reservation deadline for the summit is February 9, 2018!

Have You Registered for the 2018 AHCA/NCAL Independent Owner Leadership Conference?
AHCA/NCAL’s Independent Owner Leadership Conference is Jazzing Up the Path to Success. Join in on the fun March 14-16, 2018 (directly following the 2018 Quality Summit) in New Orleans. Get together with AL and SNF Independent Owners from across the country to discuss the issues that matter most to you. Hot Topics this year will include ACOs, VBP, QRP measures and more. Earn up to 8.75 CEs for attending. Deadline to Register is March 2, 2018. Click here for more.

IHCA Information

IHCA Membership Directory—Last Chance to Advertise! Help Support our Directory Today!
The 2018 Illinois Health Care Association Membership Directory & Buyer’s Guide is wrapping up ASAP! Our publisher, E&M Consulting is in the final stages of putting the directory together, but wanted us to reach out to all of our members letting you know that there is still time to enhance your listing or place a display ad. I have attached the rate card for you to review the various advertising options. If you are interested, please touch base with me or E&M Consulting right away and we can get you taken care of. Click here to view the rate card. We must go to print in less than a week so get your ad sales in before it’s too late!! Please don’t hesitate to call Ashley Caldwell if you have any questions at all. As always, your support of IHCA, and our products and services, is greatly appreciated!

Members Only Web Seminar – Medicare Advantage Profitability Strategies
It’s time to drive conversations about negotiating contracts to optimize revenue. Do you know your rates? Are you making or losing money with those rates? By packaging your pay-for-performance levers in a way the payers will understand, you will be able to drive these conversations and lead to revenue optimization. Click here to view the brochure.

AL/SLF Directors Certificate Program - Class of 2018
IHCA/ICAL is offering an extensive certificate program to assist AL/SLF Directors in their operations. This program will take place over the course of 7 months and feature face-to-face sessions, as well as web seminars. The program will total 20-22 clock hours of continuing education and will conclude with a luncheon/graduation. Click here to view the program application. Deadline to submit your application is March 30, 2018.

Latest IHCA VCast
This week’s episode featured the Dave and Debbie talking about IHCA’s educational offerings. Coming soon: Past issues of the weekly VCast emails, with all of the appropriate links, will be available in the IHCA Resource Center. To access the resource center, simply log in to the member portal and click on Resources.

F-Tag Review Web Seminar Series: Comprehensive Review of Regulations and Interpretive Guidance for top F-Tags
IHCA is once again joining forces with our fellow affiliates to bring you a new web seminar series. This year’s series will focus on reviewing the top deficiencies cited nationally with the new Long Term Care Survey Process (LTCSP). Each session will include discussion on top-cited F-Tags with a review of the regulation, an analysis of the associated Interpretive Guidance, a review of survey procedures and more.

The first web seminar in the series, Comprehensive Review of Regulations and Interpretive Guidance for Infection Control/Antibiotic Stewardship F880-F881, is scheduled for Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at 9:30 a.m.

For more information, check out the IHCA Seminars page on our website.

Infection Preventionist Specialized Training (IPCO) Now Available!
IHCA has partnered with AHCA to bring you a new quality improvement resource that will meet the new Infection Preventionist specialized training requirement finalized by CMS in the Requirements of Participation (RoP) for long term care centers. The Infection Preventionist Specialized Training (IPCO) course provides specialized training for healthcare professionals who seek to serve as Infection Preventionists. Through this course, individuals will be specially trained to effectively implement and manage an Infection Prevention and Control Program at their nursing center.
IHCA and AHCA are committed to ensuring nursing centers are fully prepared to meet the rigors of the new RoP requirements. This course is an online, self-study program with 23 hours of training. It includes online lectures, case studies and interactive components taught by an array of experts from around the country. To learn more, see the Infection Preventionist Specialized Training (IPCO) slides. To register, just click here.

**LTCNA Offering Core Competency 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 a future issue!!

Has your company recently celebrated a milestone? 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!