Experts Cite LTC’s Better Disaster Preparedness Scores, but Say More Needed

Last week, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released its National Health Security Preparedness Index, which measures the nation’s day-to-day readiness for addressing a health emergency. According to the report, the health care field is much more equipped than it was five years ago for such circumstances. However, field experts warned, long term care is far from where it needs to be.

Though the U.S. scored a 7.1 on a 10 point scale, up 3 percent from last year nearly 11 percent over the past 5 years, recent disasters like Hurricane Irma and the recent Legionnaire’s disease outbreak here in Illinois have proven that there is more work to do for the profession.

According to Mary Helen McSweeney-Field, associate professor of healthcare management at Towson (MD) University and noted expert in LTC emergency preparedness, many out there still think of this as a hospital-centric issue. “We have all of these wonderful resources now, but, folks, this is paper preparedness,” she said. "I'm not saying it's bad, but it's a whole different ball game from ever experiencing an event where you have to evacuate and then bring your residents back to your organization."

Despite the comprehensiveness of CMS guidelines, providers still may not be prepared for all of the events that can occur during an evacuation, added Philip DuBois, an author, consultant and speaker on long term care administration issues. The bottom line, he said, is to let the type and scale of your incident determine your evacuation response. Be aware of the gaps in risk management and let your plans evolve over time, and be alert to the possible negative impacts of evacuation on frail residents.

“Drill, drill, drill,” he said. “And after you've had a drill or a natural event, once the dust settles, go back to your emergency plan with a pencil and eraser and figure out what you need to update because, inevitably, there will be something that you can learn through that process. And it's not just the management team that has learned those lessons. Debrief with your staff at large — everybody who had a role in it.”

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

Focus Shifts in Alzheimer's Research

Leading scientists in the field of Alzheimer's research believe it is time to shift the focus of their work to study brain changes rather than symptoms of the disease, according to a recent report. This would be a major policy change for investigating the degenerative disease.
"We have to focus on biological or physical targets to zero in on potential treatments for Alzheimer's," explained Dr. Eliezer Masliah, who directs the division of neuroscience at the U.S. National Institute of Aging (NIA), a partner in the new Research Framework guidelines.

For example, pre-symptomatic signs of Alzheimer's disease that can appear on neurological scans, like tissue atrophy or amyloid protein plaques or tau protein "tangles" that can be seen building up in the brain.

By shifting the research focus away from memory loss and other Alzheimer's symptoms, and towards these types of brain changes, "I think we have a better shot at finding therapies, and sooner," Masliah added in an NIA news release.

Currently, the Alzheimer's Association estimates that there are 5.7 million Americans living with Alzheimer's. This number is expected to rise to 14 million by 2050.

The researchers behind the new report noted that, until recently, there were clinical trials of treatments for Alzheimer's disease in which up to one-third of symptomatic participants did not have the particular disease-related brain changes targeted by the experimental drug being tested.

"With the aging of the global population, and the ever-escalating cost of care for people with dementia, new methods are desperately needed to improve the process of therapy development and increase the likelihood of success," report co-author Maria Carrillo, chief science officer at the Alzheimer's Association, said in an association news release.

With other health issues, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, doctors can look for biomarkers—changes in the underlying biology of the organs or structures involved. The research team wants to do the same for the brain and Alzheimer's, which should also further work being done on ways to prevent the disease.

The new definition -- which needs to be confirmed in different groups of people worldwide -- would help speed and improve the development of treatments for Alzheimer's disease, said report first author Dr. Clifford Jack Jr., of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

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

**Under-65 Nursing Home Population Grows in Some States, Putting New Emphasis on Mental Health Care**

A recent report found that though nursing facilities have traditionally been designed for elderly residents, younger residents are using these centers more often—bringing with them fewer physical demands and more behavioral health diagnoses.

"We've typically had this image of a nursing home of being (for) older adults, and now they are middle older adults," said Ian Matt Nelson, a research scholar at Miami University's Scripps Gerontology Center, who recently co-authored a report on this trend for the state of Ohio. They found that in Ohio, 20 percent of Medicaid long-stay residents were under the age of 65 in 2015, putting them 11th in the nation.

Across the country, the under-65 proportion of residents climbed steadily from 16.5 percent of residents in 2011 to 17.4 percent in 2015. The rate jumped the most for those between 55 and 64, up from 9.8 to 11.1 percent in 2015.

Co-author John Bowblis told McKnight's that unpublished data from the study shows Utah leads the nation in the prevalence of young long-term care Medicaid patients, followed by Illinois, Nevada, Missouri and Arizona.

Katherine Judge, a professor of psychology at Cleveland State University, told Crain's Cleveland that younger adults will present a challenge for nursing homes.

"I think the implications are what are we doing on the community side and on the nursing home side to address the needs?" Judge asked. "It's not clear for example what community services would best meet the needs of these individuals, or at this point how nursing homes might be able to offer different services to address their needs."

For more details, click here to read the full article from McKnight's.
Smartphone App Tracks Parkinson’s Symptoms

More than 10 million people around the world are living with Parkinson’s disease. Each year, approximately 60,000 Americans are diagnosed with Parkinson’s.

A new study, recently published in *JAMA Neurology*, found that smartphone software and technology can accurately track the severity of the symptoms of Parkinson’s disease, which could give researchers and clinicians a new tool to both develop new drugs and better treat the disease.

“This study demonstrates that we can create both an objective measure of the progression of Parkinson’s and one that provides a richer picture of the daily lived experience of the disease,” said Ray Dorsey, a University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) neurologist and coauthor of the paper.

As noted by study authors, one of the difficulties in managing Parkinson’s is that symptoms of the disease can fluctuate widely on a daily basis. That makes the process of tracking the progression of the disease and adjusting treatment a challenge for physicians who may only get a snapshot of a patient’s condition once every several months when they visit the clinic. This variation also limits the insight that researchers can gather on the effectiveness of experimental treatments.

The study worked to harness the capabilities of technology that most of us already carry around all day, every day.

Researchers recruited nearly 130 individuals who remotely completed a series of tasks on a smartphone app. The tasks measure voice fluctuations, the speed of finger tapping, walking speed and balanced.

As a part of the study, the researchers also conducted in-person visits with 50 patients with Parkinson’s disease and controls in the clinic. Participants completed the tasks on the app and were also seen by a neurologist and scored using a standard clinical evaluation tool for the disease. Measurements the app collected corresponded with what the physicians observed in the clinic.

The smartphone data collected from the larger group of participants was then analyzed using a machine-learning algorithm which the researchers used to generate a mobile Parkinson disease score (mPDS) that uses a scale of 1-100—with a higher number indicating a greater severity of symptoms.

While the near term uses of the technology will likely be in clinical trials, which would allow researchers to observe in real time the impact of new treatments, it could ultimately provide physicians and patients with a new tool to monitor the disease.

“The ability to remotely monitor patients on a much more frequent basis, more accurately track the symptoms and progression of the disease, and monitor the impact of exercise, sleep, and medications and their side effects holds the potential to transform how we treat Parkinson’s disease,” stated neurologist Christopher Tarolli, a coauthor of the study.

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

May 2018 Observances

**May 6-12 is National Nurses Week**: National Nurses Week begins each year on May 6th and ends on May 12th, Florence Nightingale’s birthday. It features a host of events across the U.S. to honor nurses for the work they do, and educates the public about nurses’ role in health care. Take the opportunity during National Nurses Week 2018 to show your nurses how much you value their dedication and hard work! Click here for more information.

**May 6-12 is National Hospital Week**: Celebrating National Hospital Week provides an opportunity to thank all of the dedicated individuals – physicians, nurses, therapists, engineers, food service workers, volunteers, administrators and so many more – for their contributions. Feel free to use the 2018 National Hospital Week resources to help get the word out about National Hospital Week.

**May 13-19 is National Skilled Nursing Care Week**: The 2018 NSNCW (formerly National Nursing Home Week) theme announced by AHCA, “Celebrating Life’s Stories”, serves as a tribute to life’s most significant events, relationships and
experiences that shape the unique perspectives of residents, families, staff, and volunteers in long term and post-acute care. Click here for more information.

**May 13-19 is National Women’s Health Week:** It’s never too early or late to work toward being your healthiest you! This observance was created to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. This NWHW take the opportunity to encourage the women in your life to take control of their health. Visit womenshealth.gov for more information.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**NCAL Announces 2018 NALW Theme – Capture the Moment**

The National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) today revealed “Capture the Moment” as 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 local communities to celebrate the individuals served in assisted living and learn more about this sector of long term care. Click here to read the release they issued this morning. Visit the NALW page for more information and to access this year’s graphics.

**Registration Open for the 69th AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo**

Registration is now open for the 69th Annual AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo. This year's event will be held in San Diego, October 7-10. Join your colleagues from around the country for unbeatable networking, spectacular speakers, on-target education sessions, and a show-stopping Expo Hall filled with solutions to your toughest challenges. You'll also find lots of opportunities to soak in the sun and charm of your surroundings.

Register for convention, and bring a colleague! Earn CEUs, discuss the latest challenges, get inspired, and make important new connections in the field. Four full days designed to help you achieve your toughest goals and improve the quality of care you provide in your centers and communities.

Don’t forget to include a ticket to NCAL Day on Sunday, October 7 with your registration package, to complete your assisted living education experience.

Check out this year’s website for online registration and complete event details.

**Call for Entries – 2018 AHCA Awards Program**

We are now accepting entries for the AHCA Awards Program. AHCA honors individuals who are committed to improving the quality of life for residents. The categories are as follows:

- Not for Profit Trustee of the Year
- Not for Profit Program of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year
  - Young Adult (Ages 13-19)
  - Adult
  - Group

Nominations packets are available on AHCA’s website. In a change from previous years, Volunteer of the Year nominations may be submitted directly by centers in good standing with the state affiliate.

Please spread the word and take the time to submit a nomination. Honorees will be recognized at AHCA/NCAL’s 69th Annual Convention and & Expo in San Diego.

**Registration Now Open for 2018 AHCA/NCAL Congressional Briefing**

Join your colleagues from across the country June 4 & 5 as we gather in Washington, DC for two full days of exciting advocacy efforts, updates and discussions. The AHCA/NCAL Congressional Briefing offers you the unique and priceless opportunity to meet with your Members of Congress and tell them what you would like them to do to best help you maintain quality care in your centers.

You’ll also hear from outstanding speakers. This year’s Opening Keynote is Carl Bernstein,
legendary Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, author, and political analyst.

The Advanced Registration Deadline is May 7 and prospective attendees are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Hotel space will fill up quickly and those who register and book their rooms early are much more likely to find space in the conference hotel.

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. For questions, please contact meetings@ahca.org, or call (202) 842-4444.

2018 NSNCW Toolkit is Now Available!
In addition to the planning guide for National Skilled Nursing Care Week (NSNCW) 2018, a new toolkit is now available!! To access the toolkit and other important information, click here. This toolkit includes:

- Sample Press Release Template
- Sample Social Media Posts/Newsletter Content
- Sample Proclamation
- Sample Media Advisory
- Sample Letter to the Editor

This year’s observance will be held May 13-19. 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.

Upcoming Webinars
- LTC Trend Tracker℠ 101 | June 21, 2018 | 1:00 p.m. CST

IHCA PAC Information

Dates for the 2018 IHCA PAC events have been announced! IHCA PAC annually puts on a number of fundraising events to promote our political efforts. We are now looking for sponsors (and participants!) for this year’s outings. Please mark your calendar for the following 2018 IHCA PAC events:

Southern Illinois Golf Outing - May 14 - Sign up today!
IHCA’s 4th 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. The 2018 outing will be at the same venue and prices include greens fees, golf, lunch, drinks and a reception after the outing. Click here for registration form. $100 per person/$375 per foursome

IHCA PAC Annual Baseball Outing - July 20
An event that quickly became a crowd favorite, 2018 marks the 6th 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 2016 World Champion Chicago Cubs and perennial favorite St. Louis Cardinals. Pricing is all inclusive. Click here for the sign up form. $250 per person

IHCA Information

IHCA’s CE Central is Now Available Online
Starting with the 2017 IHCA Convention and our 2018 educational sessions, IHCA will now offer the ability to access their continuing education certificates online! To access CE Central, go to www.ihca.com/education and click on the CE Central link. Once there, simply enter your first and last name into the system to retrieve your information.

LTC Today Spring/Summer 2018 Edition Now Available Online!
By now you should have received, or will be receiving shortly, your Spring/Summer 2018 edition of LTC Today magazine. We hope you will enjoy the new look! If you need additional copies, please contact Ashley Caldwell at acaldwell@ihca.com. In addition to your printed copy, you also have access to the digital available here. Past digital issues can also be found on our website (click here).
We are always looking for members to feature in our magazine, so if you have a resident story, an innovative program, a facility event or other interesting idea you would like to see featured please let us know.

**IHCA Excellence Awards – Staff & Specialty – And the Nominees Are...**

This year’s Staff & Specialty Awards program received nearly 100 nominations from IHCA member centers around the state. We are thrilled to be able to recognize the efforts of these outstanding staff members, administrators, volunteers and programs.

Winners will be announced in just a few weeks, during National Skilled Nursing Care Week (formerly national nursing home week. [Click here to view the 2018 nominees.](#)

_Congratulations to everyone who was nominated! Keep up the great work._

**Maitland-Warner Scholarship Fund Now Accepting Applications**

Each year, the John W. Maitland, Jr. – Joseph F. Warner Long Term Care Nurses Scholarship Fund awards scholarships to individuals seeking to pursue nursing degrees and employment in long term care in Illinois. [Click here to access a printable application](#). [Click here to apply online](#).

Before you begin your application, please be aware that there are several additional materials that are required and must be uploaded before you can submit your application.

The following information/documentation must be attached below in order for your application to be considered:

- A copy of the letter of acceptance from the nursing school.
- Proof of completion of prerequisites for the LPN, RN or APN program (as applicable).
- Two (2) letters of recommendation, one by the facility/program Administrator and one by the Director of Nursing.
- LPN, RN and APN Scholarship Evaluation Form completed by the Director of Nursing or Administrator. ([Click here to download the Evaluation Form](#))

***Deadline for submission of all materials is June 1, 2018.***

**MCO Web Seminars for IHCA Members**

IHCA recently hosted free web seminars with MCOs involved in HealthChoice Illinois. As Illinois’ Medicaid program moves completely into Managed Care, you will need to learn how each organization operates and what is expected of you as providers.

Below are links to presentation materials from our Meridian and Molina webinars. If and when the BCBS presentations become available, we will share them with you.

- [Meridian Presentation](#)
- [Meridian Prior Authorization Form](#)
- [Molina Presentation](#)

**Infection Preventionist Specialized Training (IPCO)**

The most frequently cited F-Tag in standard nursing facility health inspection surveys under the new survey process is F880 – Infection Prevention & Control. AHCA has designed an important educational tool to support infection prevention and control programs. Their [Infection Preventionist Specialized Training](#) (IPCO) program was created to prepare individuals to effectively implement and manage an Infection Prevention & Control program in skilled nursing centers.

The training course registration fee is $450 for IHCA. There are no refunds and no transfers. Payment and registration must be made online in ahcancalED. Group discounts are available for purchases of 25 or more IPCO registrations. The IPCO course can be [accessed here](#).
Latest IHCA VCast
This week’s episode featured Bill Bell giving an update on PBJ and its impact on Five-Star. VCast Online: Past issues of the weekly VCast emails, with all of the appropriate links, are now available in the IHCA Resource Center. To access the resource center, simply log in to the member portal and click on Resources.

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!