Happy Nurses Week!

National Nursing Week is almost over—have you thanked a nurse today?. We would like to say thank you to all of the nurses out there, especially the long term care nurses who care for our facilities’ residents every day! Please take the time this week to honor the hard work and dedication of your center’s nursing staff!

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.

Click here for more information.

Next Week is National Skilled Nursing Care Week!

Established by the American Health Care Association (AHCA) in 1967 and beginning each year on Mother’s Day, National Skilled Nursing Care Week (NSNCW), formerly known as National Nursing Home Week, provides an opportunity to recognize the role of skilled nursing care centers in caring for America’s seniors and individuals with disabilities.

This year’s theme, “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.

To view the press release sent out earlier this week by IHCA, click here. To access the 2018 toolkit and other important information, click here.

How to Improve Staffing Without Breaking the Budget

Staffing is an ongoing concern in long term care. However, there’s one way to address that concern, which doesn’t involve spending tons of dollars.

A recent study done in Massachusetts found that training long term care supervisors in interpersonal communication and conflict management helps to improve both job quality of entry-level workers and employee retention. According to a press release regarding the pilot program, one facility actually found return investments so great that it began to train all supervisors in such skills.

“The long term care industry has been facing a staffing crisis for years and the demand will only increase as Americans continue to live longer. Focusing on job quality will help America be more competitive and adapt to changing economic and business realities,” Kelly Aiken, VP for the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, which conducted the study in conjunction with the Massachusetts Senior Care Association and SkillWorks, said in a statement. “By working with the Massachusetts Senior Care Association and these employers, we are able to demonstrate how investing in frontline workers improves business and patient outcomes.”

The PHI Coaching Approach, which teaches a “relational approach to supervision,” was implemented in five Bay State SNFs as part of the yearlong trial. Overall, they found, supervisors improved listening, established better relationships with CNAs and other stakeholders, and better resolved issues without disciplinary actions, according to the study.

For more details, click here to read the full article from McKnight’s.

The Diet that Might Cure Depression

The effect that diet can have on our health has long been studied and discussed. A poor diet is a leading risk factor for early death, responsible for one in five deaths globally. Meanwhile, depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide. A new area of research suggests the two might be related—an unhealthy diet might make us depressed, and depression, in turn, makes us feel sicker.

In a recently released abstract, researchers studying 964 elderly participants over six and a half years found those who followed the DASH diet, which emphasizes whole grains, fruits and vegetables, had lower rates of depression, while those who ate a traditional Western diet were more prone to depression. The participants were asked how often they ate various foods, and they were screened for depression annually using a questionnaire.

“I think we need to view food as medicine,” Laurel J. Cherian, an assistant professor of vascular neurology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago and the study’s lead author, told me. “Medications to treat depression are wonderful, but for many people, it’s going to be a combination of things.”

The DASH diet, which was developed by the US National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, is nothing revolutionary—a typical dinner consists of a lean meat, baked potato and a lot of vegetables. Researchers are still trying to figure out why it’s so beneficial, but a major pathway might be through the gut-brain connection. When people eat a plant-heavy diet, the fiber from the plant matter ferments in the gut and creates short-chain fatty acids, which, in turn, regulate the immune system and influence gene expression in the brain and elsewhere. People who eat fiber have more diverse gut bacteria, and these bacteria make various chemicals that influence our mood.

Inflammatory molecules, called cytokines, that are produced by body fat can spark inflammation elsewhere in the body. Inflammation increases the risk of depression and other diseases by harming the lining of the blood vessels. Meanwhile, healthy fats increase the production of proteins called neurotrophins, which “act like manure to the brain as they promote the growth of new brain cells in the hippocampus,” said Felice Jacka, a professor of nutritional psychiatry at Australia’s Deakin University. “There is a strong link between the quality of people’s diets and the size of their hippocampus.”

Though Cherian’s study has not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal, other researchers have found similar antidepressant benefits from the DASH Diet, and the link between diet and mental health has been studied for years.

For more detail on this topic, click here to read the full article from The Atlantic.

This Eye Fat Could Fight Vision Loss in Diabetes

According to a recent study, a particular type of lipid, or fat—thought to exist only in the skin—lives in your eye as well and may play a major role in deterring the eye disease diabetic retinopathy.
Diabetic retinopathy, one of the most disabling complications of diabetes, is the leading cause of new cases of vision loss among adults.

“Our study presents an unexpected finding that the connections between cells in the retinal blood vessels contain unusual, long-chain lipids that may keep vessels from leaking, possibly preventing diabetic retinopathy from occurring,” said Julia Busik, lead author of the study in the journal *Diabetes* and a physiology professor at Michigan State University.

Diabetes can expose blood vessels to high levels of glucose and unhealthy amounts of lipids, which throws off the balance of nutrients that are transported throughout the body. When this happens, explained Busik, “the vessels leak and become fragile, leading to the development of diabetic retinopathy.” It appears as though “these long-chain lipids and the enzymes that produce them can protect the retina and its blood vessels.”

Incorporating more long-chain lipids into the eye could possibly be a new way to treat diabetic retinopathy down the road, either through injections or even eye drops, said Busik.

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

**May 2018 Observances**

**May 30 is National Senior Health and Fitness Day:** This year marks the 25th Annual National Senior Health and Fitness Day. The common goal for this day is to help keep older Americans healthy and fit. Always held the last Wednesday in May, National Senior Health & Fitness Day is the nation’s largest annual health and wellness event for older adults. The theme for this year’s event is “Active Today...Healthier Tomorrow!” Click here for more information.

**May is Older Americans Month:** Since 1963, the month of May has been set aside to appreciate and celebrate the vitality of older adults and their contributions to our communities. For more information visit www.aoa.gov.

**May is Better Hearing and Speech Month:** This annual observance provides the opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote treatment that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding or hearing. Visit the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s website for more.

**May is National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month:** Each year, the National Osteoporosis Foundation organizes this monthlong observance in order to bring national awareness to the condition and to encourage men and women to start conversations about bone health. Visit www.nof.org for more.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**Call for Entries – 2018 AHCA Awards Program – Just a Few Weeks Left to Submit Your Nominations!**

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. The deadline to submit is June 8, 2018.

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 Deadline Extended for 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 Advanced Registration Deadline has been extended to May 14. Click here to register.

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.

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. 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.

Upcoming Webinars
- Webinar: Supporting Older Adults with Substance Use Disorders | May 16, 2018 | 11:00 a.m. CT
- 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 – Register today—Event is Monday!
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.

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 – BCBS Presentations Now Available
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 the presentation materials:

BCBS Provider Orientation
BCBS - LTC and SLF Additional Information
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 an update on Medicaid Pendings from Ashley Snavely and Debbie Jackson discussed nursing programs and scholarships available through IHCA/LTCNA. 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 à 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!