Happy New Year!

A new year has begun—full of good intentions, resolutions and plenty of new opportunities! Now is the time to get out there and try something new or make a fresh start!

IHCA has some new opportunities and exciting changes in store for 2015, so be on the lookout for more information on these as it becomes available. See below for what’s happening now at your association!

Bundle Up! Temperatures Are Dropping and Seniors Are at Risk in Winter Months

Freezing temperatures and gusting winds are nothing new for Illinois residents. This winter has already proven to be a dangerous time for cold and flu symptoms, but there are other risk factors for seniors that are important to keep in mind. Frostbite and hypothermia can become a real problem.

Hypothermia, when a person’s body temperature drops below normal and stays there for a prolonged period of time, can lead to serious health issues. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a the body’s ability to endure long periods of exposure to cold diminishes with age. Older individuals can also be at increased risk for hypothermia due to certain illnesses or medications. They may also be less active and less able to generate body heat to keep themselves warm. Hypothermia can even occur indoors.

It is important to ensure that your residents are staying warm. Make sure they are wearing layers of clothing, warm socks or slippers and keeping their heads covered if needed. Be sure that your residents are dressed appropriately if they are braving the elements outside. Look for signs of hypothermia, such as confusion or sleepiness, slowed or slurred speech, shivering or stiffness in the arms and legs, weak pulse, poor control over body movements or slow reactions. If a resident displays symptoms of hypothermia check their temperature and take action if needed.

Newly Discovered Anti-Biotic Could Become Powerful Weapon Against Infections

Researchers recently discovered a new class of antibiotic that has the ability to kill drug-resistant bacteria, including MRSA and other life-threatening infections. Teixobactin, the new antibiotic, attacks substances in the cell walls of harmful bacteria, unlike other antibiotics that target bacterial proteins.

Harmful bugs like MRSA can morph and begin producing proteins to make them drug-resistant. This new development could be a game changer because researchers believe it is highly unlikely that bacteria will become resistant to teixobactin. It kills microbes by blocking their capacity to build their cell walls, making it extremely difficult for bacteria to evolve resistance. This could make teixobactin a powerful weapon against antimicrobial resistance.
Human clinical trials may not be able to begin for several years and it is important to remember that it only works on types of bacteria that actually have cell walls, leaving out some dangerous bacteria such as E. Coli. However, there is a great deal of excitement surrounding this discovery. It has given researchers a fresh outlook and a new direction to take on the road to antibiotic discovery.

Click here to read more.

**Nearly 15 Percent of Adults in the US Suffer from Lung Disorders**

According to health officials, approximately one out of every seven US adults, middle-aged and older, suffer from some type of lung disorder like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. More than one-third of these individuals report moderate or severe respiratory problems.

“There are a huge number of Americans that experience lung obstruction,” said Dr. Norman Edelman, a senior medical advisor to the American Lung Association, who was not involved in the research. "It's a major problem; it's the third leading cause of death in the United States.”

For those with moderate to severe disease, more than 80 percent said they experienced at least one symptom, such as shortness of breath, wheezing, chronic cough or chronic phlegm. Shortness of breath was most common.

Though the survey did not consider COPD and asthma individually, researchers believe that COPD is more prevalent due to the ages of those surveyed. COPD is a progressive, debilitating disease without a cure, said Edelman.

"Treatments are directed at symptom relief, so we have airway expanders and oxygen if the COPD is severe,” he said. "There are also anti-inflammatory drugs that are used to reduce the number of flare-ups."  

According to Edelman, flare-ups are usually caused by infection and lung function decreases after each episode. The majority of COPD cases, about 85 percent, are related to smoking. With a decline in the number of Americans smoking, the incidence of COPD is likely to drop in the future.

Click here to read more.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

*The National Quality Forum Endorses PointRight® Pro 30™ Rehospitalization Measure*

AHCA and PointRight Inc., recently announced that the National Quality Forum (NQF) has endorsed the PointRight® Pro 30™ rehospitalization measure. This measure, sponsored by AHCA and PointRight Inc. is becoming the industry-standard way to manage and improve rehospitalization.

“This endorsement aligns with AHCA’s mission to improve lives by delivering solutions for quality care,” said AHCA President and CEO Mark Parkinson. “Our partnership with PointRight provides AHCA’s more than 9,600 skilled nursing center members with access to this valuable resource through our LTC Trend Tracker. It’s tools such as this that allows us to improve quality care and reduce hospital readmissions.”

**National Quality Award Program—Deadlines Approaching!!**

Time is running out to apply for an AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award! This award program recognizes high-performing long term care centers across the nation. The program three-step program is based on the core values and criteria of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. Each level has its own distinct rigors and requirements for quality and performance excellence.

*Bronze Award Applications Due January 29, 2015!*
*Silver and Gold Applications Due February 12, 2015!*

**Share Your Story: What Does Long Term Care Mean to You?**

Next Thursday, January 15, 2015 (at 3:00 pm EST), AHCA/NCAL will be hosting a Twitter & Facebook conversation about long term care, and they want you to chime in! AHCA/NCAL will be asking questions for you to answer on the social media sites for you to answer. Use #WeAreSolution or visit www.facebook.com/careadvocacy or www.twitter.com/careadvocacy
to share your story or offer your perspective. They are looking for the big picture so everyone is invited!! [Click here](#) for more information.

**Time is Running Out to Register for the 7th Annual AHCA/NCAL Quality Symposium**

Don’t miss next month’s Quality Symposium! In today’s rapidly changing world, performance excellence is ever more central to success. This makes it critical to build on our momentum and accelerate the pace of change.

The AHCA/NCAL Quality Symposium is a fantastic opportunity for networking with your peers and earning up to 15.5 CEUs through Intensives education sessions. **Deadline to register is January 23, 2015!** Don’t delay!

**IHCA Association Information**

**Coming Soon—New and Improved IHCA Website!!**

IHCA will be launching a completely revamped [www.ihca.com](http://www.ihca.com) next week. This version of the site was created with our members in mind. With increased functionality, the website will put a wealth of information at your fingertips, in an attractive, easy-to-navigate and user-friendly format. Tune in next week to check it out!

**IHCA’s New Monthly Lunch and Learn!**

New for 2015! Each month, IHCA will be offering a Lunch and Learn session. These sessions will include a lunch, compliments of an IHCA associate member, as well as a 90 minute educational session that will be broadcast as a web seminar so that even those individuals who are unable to attend in person can take part in the educational opportunity.

Mark Your Calendars for the first in a series of monthly Lunch and Learn sessions. The first session in this new program will be held on January 22, 2015 (Thursday) and hosted by Assurance Agency in Schaumburg, IL. The educational session by Lori Heilstedt, a Healthcare Safety Advocate at Assurance Agency, will cover fall prevention. For more information, [click here](#) to view the brochure.

**IHCA’s Destination Education is Back!**

IHCA is bringing back our Destination Education program, and this time we’re offering you the chance to hit the seas with an Alaskan Cruise! This seven-night cruise aboard the Carnival Legend will depart Seattle, Washington on July 14, 2015 and head up north to Alaska with several stops along the way. Education sessions with our “educator in residence” for the trip, Susan Gardiner, will cover various aspects of quality in long term care and participants can earn 10 CEs for attending. For more information, [click here](#) to view the brochure.

**Send Us Your Stories!! Your Facility Could be Featured in the Next Issue of LTC Today!!**

Planning in well underway for the Spring/Summer 2015 issue of IHCA’s association magazine, **LTC Today**. Do you have a new program or a facility event you would like to see featured? Do you have a particular resident who you think deserves to be recognized? If so, contact Ashley Caldwell at [acaldwell@ihca.com](mailto:acaldwell@ihca.com) and you may see your story in an upcoming issue!

**IHCA Member Spotlight**

**IHCA Associate Member – Duane Morris, LLP**

**Duane Morris**, LLP is a full-service law firm that has seen tremendous growth in the past fourteen years, nearly tripling in size. With more than 700 attorneys in more than two dozen offices in the United States and internationally, Duane Morris has a diverse company culture and is involved in a variety of industries and areas of law, notably long term care. With Duane Morris’s assistance long term care providers rely on their counsel to help them navigate the complicated operational and regulatory environment in their profession. Duane Morris offers a wealth of experience in this environment, including the following:

- Acquisitions and Sales
- Development and Financing of New Facilities
- Corporate Compliance, Risk Management, and Fraud and Abuse Counseling
- Government Audit and Enforcement Matters
- Administrative Litigation
- Reimbursement Matters
- Certificate of Need, Licensing and Change of Ownership
For nearly three decades this firm has been involved with IHCA and the long term care profession in the state of Illinois. Duane Morris has been actively involved in the association and acts as an invaluable resource for other IHCA members. Not only does their lead partner Nick Lynn serve as general counsel for IHCA, but he also chairs the legal committee, and he and his fellow attorneys at Duane Morris are always willing to answer member questions when they arise. They also provide presentations for the annual convention and trade show and other educational sessions throughout the year to keep members up-to-date and well informed about a variety of topics pertinent to the profession. Duane Morris, LLP was named as IHCA’s Associate Member of the Year in 2011 and recognized for their dedication to the long term care profession.

**Interested in Seeing Your Company or Facility Featured in Our IHCA Member Spotlight?**

IHCA is proud of our diverse membership and all of your successes and accomplishments. 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? If you would like to see your company or facility recognized in *Members Only*--Associate Members, Facilities, Corporations alike--contact acaldwell@ihca.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!