Happy New Year from IHCA!

Happy New Year from all of us here at IHCA. As we begin another busy, busy year, we wish you all a healthy and successful 2019!

As we move further into the new year, IHCA staff will be busy with a variety of important tasks, preparing for the coming months. Below are a just few reminders/notices:

- The Call for Presentations for this year’s convention and expo is open, and proposals must be submitted by February 1, 2019.
- Annual Dues Invoices have been sent out. In order to receive the 5 percent discount, annual dues must be paid by February 15, 2019.
- The Annual Membership Directory & Buyers’ Guide is being finalized now and will go to print soon. If you have changes to your company’s information, contact Ashley Caldwell ASAP. Ad spaces are still available through our publishing partner, E&M Solutions. If you are interested, please see the IHCA Information section below for more information.
- Associate Membership Dues are now being handled on a calendar year basis, which started last year. The 2019 invoices have been sent out. If you have any questions, please contact our office.
- The Prospectus for the 2019 Expo is now available. See the IHCA Information section for more.
- The IHCA Annual Report is coming soon. Be on the lookout for that next month!

Four Things to Watch in 2019

Last month, the following editorial article written by John O’Connor, Editorial Director at McKnight’s, was posted on their site.

Hard to believe, but January is less than half a month away.

Among other things, that means we’ll soon be treated to a boatload of predictions for 2019. Most will probably be much more than you need.

So in the spirit of less is more, here are a mere four developments you may want to keep an eye on.
1. Tell-offs and sell-offs
You know that big ol’ bullseye that always seems to be on your back? It’s about to get bigger. Our government is racking up record deficits and Medicare is about seven years from insolvency. As the day of reckoning gets nearer, the feds will likely demand belt-tightening, and yes, closer scrutiny.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has more tools than ever to monitor and audit who has been naughty and nice. So it’s a safe bet they – and others – will be more than happy to reveal what’s found. Particularly if it comes at your expense.

And while the Cavalry (also known as aging baby boomers) will be here in a few years, they obviously haven’t arrived yet. That means many operators are struggling to meet payroll and other fiscal obligations. By choice, necessity or both, we can expect to see many independently-run facilities seeking buyers. That’s especially the case for communities that are old-school in their approach to care, located in rural areas, or who happen to be on the naughty list with local hospitals.

2. The big print may taketh away, but the small print will giveth
Speaking of belt tightening, the general trend toward demanding better and cheaper care will continue. Operators can expect to see both the government and insurance companies putting new rules in place to trim outlays as much as possible.

But if the skilled care sector is nothing else, it is resourceful. Its army of lawyers, consultants and accountants has an amazing ability to sniff out buried clauses, passages and other loopholes that can be spun into gold. If past behavior is a good predictor of future outcomes, we very likely will see history repeat itself here.

3. Out with the old …
To be sure, we are seeing a general upstream push among many skilled-care players. The jury is still out on whether PDPM will help or hinder that trend. Regardless, most operators will need to adapt in ways both large and small. For some that will mean better alignment with what used to be called hospital systems (“health systems” appears to be the term du jour). Others will become quite familiar with Medicare Disadvantage, or Medicare Advantage. For still others, change will mean better community integration, maybe even applied population health tactics. Then there will be the few renegades who completely blow the doors off, and opt to make geriatric-focused care and services just a part of an overall portfolio.

4. Smart will beat strong
Who would have thought a decade ago that skilled care would be a driving force in technology, analytics or even artificial intelligence?

To be sure, the advance of new knowledge is uneven. But it’s clearly happening. Moreover, it is increasingly going to be the tool that separates the haves from the have-nots. For as the saying goes, the strong take from the weak, and the smart take from the strong. Skilled care will increasingly become a game that favors the smart.

Will there be other notable developments as well? Of course. But these four will surely leave a mark.

*This article was taken from McKnight’s Long Term Care News.*

**How Seniors Can Prevent Hypothermia This Winter**

During the cold Midwest winters here in Illinois, keeping our seniors warm is a constant worry. Because older individuals can lose body heat quickly, and can often find it difficult to recognize the signs, even short exposure to cold weather can put them at risk for hypothermia.

As noted in a recent article from HealthDay News, warning signs of hypothermia include the following: slowed or slurred speech; sleepiness or confusion; shivering or stiffness in the arms and legs; poor control over body movement; slow reactions; weak pulse; or a core body temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.

The article also notes that, according to the U.S. National Institute on Aging and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a body temperature that low can cause health problems, such as heart rhythm disturbances, and kidney and liver damage. Tips to avoid hypothermia include:
When outside in the cold, wear a hat, scarf and gloves. Wear several layers of clothing to trap warm air between the layers.

Let others know when you’re planning to spend time outside and have a fully charged cellphone with you.

Keep your home warm. Set the thermostat to at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Even homes at 60 to 65 degrees can trigger hypothermia in older adults.

At home, wear long underwear under clothes as well as socks and slippers. Use a blanket to keep your legs and shoulders warm and wear a hat indoors.

To view the full article from HealthDay, click here.

Feds Release 5 Top Threats, 10 Best Practices to Help SNFs Battle Cyber Hazards

Nursing facilities and other healthcare providers now have “the book” to battle the threat of cyber breaches.

Health and Human Services rolled out a new publication, “Health Industry Cybersecurity Practices: Managing Threats and Protecting Patients,” on Friday. The four-volume guide comes after two years of work by more than 150 cybersecurity and healthcare experts.

It explores five of the most relevant and current cyber threats in the healthcare field, along with detailing 10 best practices that facilities can implement to battle them — ranging from email protection systems to checks on the cyber safety of medical devices. HHS notes that the U.S. healthcare system lost about $6.2 billion in 2016 alone due to data breaches, with $2.2 million the average cost for a single organization.

“We heard loud and clear through this process that providers need actionable and practical advice, tailored to their needs, to manage modern cyber threats,” Erik Decker, industry co-lead and chief information security and privacy officer for the University of Chicago Medicine, said in an announcement. “That is exactly what this resource delivers; recommendations stratified by the size of the organization, written for both the clinician as well as the IT subject matter expert.”

The publication and its recommendations stem from a mandate set by the Cybersecurity Act of 2015 to develop guidelines to reduce cyber risks in healthcare. It also includes two technical volumes geared toward IT professionals, along with resources to assess healthcare organization’s current cybersecurity strategies.

In a white paper issued last year, LeadingAge noted that aging services and the rest of the healthcare industry are among the most frequently pursued for cyber-attacks because data stored is often lucrative, and security is typically weak compared to other fields.

**This article was taken from McKnight’s Long Term Care News (posted Jan. 3, 2019).**

Exercise may Improve Thinking in Sedentary Seniors with Cognitive Decline

According to a recent article from Reuters, a small experiment conducted at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, has suggested that older adults who already have some cognitive impairment, but not dementia, may find their thinking skills improve when they start doing aerobic exercise like walking or cycling a few times a week.

For the study, researchers studied 160 adults, with an average age of 65, who were all sedentary and who all had some cognitive impairment, but not dementia. The participants were randomly divided into 4 groups: aerobic exercise three times a week; nutritional counseling and a heart-healthy diet; both the exercise and nutrition counseling; or a control group that didn’t change their diet or exercise habits.

Participants assigned to exercise had three weekly sessions of 45 minutes, including a 10-minute warm up followed by 35 minutes of activities like walking, jogging or cycling. For the first three months, they worked out at 70 percent of their maximum heart rate, working up to 85 percent for the second three months.

Participants in the nutritional counseling group were taught how to follow the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet, which is a low-sodium, high-fiber diet rich in fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, low fat dairy products, whole grains and lean meats.
After six months, researchers found that people who exercised scored higher on thinking tests than they did at the start of the study, an improvement equivalent to reversing nearly nine years of aging.

“There are currently no proven medical therapies to stop or reverse age-related cognitive decline, and these lifestyle changes have the potential to delay the onset of dementia for years,” stated lead study author James Blumenthal.

People in the control group didn’t start exercising or adopt a DASH diet and were assigned only to receive health education classes. At the end of the six months, they showed no improvements in cognitive function. In fact, on average, their function declined slightly, by the equivalent of six months of aging.

Study authors have noted the limitations of this experiment, including the size and the fact that it was conducted at a single site. However, the results underscore the importance of healthy lifestyle changes for adults with cognitive impairment, explained Sandra Bond Chapman, founder of the BrainHealth center at the University of Texas at Dallas.

“The pre-dementia stage of the population studied is a critical time to be proactive about staving off brain vulnerabilities,” Chapman said to Reuters by email. “Individuals can impact their brain health significantly by exercising regularly, reducing salt and adding food that is rich in potassium and magnesium.”

Older adults should be able to find some way to get moving, even those who have pain or physical impairments or disabilities. If walking or running isn’t an option, perhaps swimming, a stationary bike or resistance training, suggested psychology researcher Scott Hayes from the Ohio State University in Columbus. “I would encourage folks to avoid the notion that they cannot exercise,” he added.

To read the complete article from Reuters, click here.

January 2019 Observances

**January 20-26 is National Activities Professionals Week:** Activity professionals play a major role in long term care facilities. Make sure to take the opportunity and show your appreciation during this weeklong observance! Click here for more information.

**January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month:** Currently, more than 3 million people in the United States have glaucoma. The National Eye Institute projects this number will reach 4.2 million by 2030, a 58 percent increase. National Glaucoma Awareness Month was created to raise awareness of glaucoma symptoms, treatment and prevention. Click here for more.

AHCA/NCAL Information

**Your Predicted Survey Score in Your Top-Line**
The 2018 fourth quarter Your Top-Line was released on January 3, 2019 for Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) members. This issue included a projection on what the SNF’s survey rating would be if the survey freeze was lifted today and the survey scoring rules used before the freeze were kept the same. For further information on how AHCA created these projections, they have created a help document that can be accessed here to answer all your questions!

Can’t find Your Top-Line in your email? Not to worry! You can access current and past Top-Lines through LTC Trend Tracker by following these easy steps here.

Have questions about LTC Trend Tracker? Visit their home page or email help@ltctrendtracker.com.

**National Quality Awards – Less than One Month Less to Apply**
The AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program provides a pathway for providers of long term and post-acute care services to journey towards performance excellence. The program is based on the core values and criteria of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.
Key Upcoming 2019 Quality Award Program Dates

- January 31, 2019: Bronze, Silver and Gold final application deadline

All deadlines are at 8 p.m. Eastern Time and late submissions are not accepted for any reason. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the AHCA/NCAL Quality Award team at qualityaward@ahca.org.

AHCA/NCAL Quality Summit: Registration Open

AHCA/NCAL 2019 Quality Summit – Disrupt to Lead. Innovate to Succeed. Calling all out-of-the box, visionary, and why not thinkers. Join other long term and post-acute quality practitioners in Tampa, FL, March 18-20, for the AHCA/NCAL Quality Summit. You can lend your voice to the conversation around what it takes to disrupt the status quo in order to move forward with new ideas in patient-centered care and operational excellence (OR delivering solutions for quality care). Online registration is now open. The registration deadline is March 5, 2019.

Registration Open for the 2019 Independent Owner (IO) Leadership Conference

The AHCA/NCAL Independent Owner (IO) Leadership Conference is a unique opportunity for you and your peers. Taking place in beautiful Tampa, FL immediately following the Quality Summit, it’s a great way to learn something new and gain insights into some of your toughest challenges. Register online today. The registration deadline is March 5, 2019.

AL Cost Calculator

The AL Cost Calculator is a web-based, enhanced resident assessment tool that assesses how costs are allocated across residents. Better understand the needs of your residents, so you can put the right staff with the right skills in the right place and at the right time. Multi-facility companies can see their company's costs across different buildings and over time. Learn more about the features and benefits.

The AL Cost Calculator will be available to NCAL member providers at no additional cost – it's included with your membership.

IHCA Information

Expo Prospectus for the 2019 Convention & Expo is Now Available!

IHCA is already well into working on this year’s event. Interested in exhibiting at this year's expo? Check out the prospectus (click here) for more information and to access the exhibitor contract. Contact IHCA’s Expo Manager Kelli Showalter at kshowalter@ihca.com.

69th Annual IHCA Convention & Expo – Call for Presentations is Open!!

Interested in speaking at a session (or two) during the 69th Annual Convention & Expo? The 2019 event, Peace, Love and Quality, will take place September 9-12, 2019 in Springfield, IL. The call for presentations will be available throughout the month of January. Click here to submit your proposals online!

IHCA Has New Remittance Address for Dues

IHCA recently changed financial institutions. If you would like to send your dues payments to our lock box, please use the following address:

IHCA
PO Box 6248
Decatur, IL 62524-6248

IHCA Member Facility Annual Dues

Each year IHCA offers our member centers the option of paying annual dues in one lump sum rather than being invoiced for monthly payments. Annual Dues invoices have been distributed. Members who choose to pay annually will receive a 5 percent discount if their dues are paid by February 15, 2019.
LTC Today Magazine – Advertising Opportunities for 2019

Are you in the process of reviewing your marketing plan for 2019? The 2019 issues of the LTC Today magazine offer multiple opportunities to promote your company, product or service to long term care providers! [Click here](#) to view the 2019 Media Kit for more information. To purchase an ad online, [click here](#).

If you have any questions or are interested in advertising, contact Tyler Gilboe at 800-572-0011 or email him at [tyler@emconsultinginc.com](mailto:tyler@emconsultinginc.com).

Latest IHCA VCast

This week’s [episode](#) featured Matt and Ashley discussing the 2019 IHCA Legislative Agenda. [VCast Online: Past 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.

CE Certificates from IHCA Educational Events Available in CE Central

Attendees can now access their Continuing Education Certificates from the 68th Annual IHCA Convention & Expo through CE Central ([click here](#)). Additionally, certificates are also available for all of our past 2018 educational sessions, as well as the 2017 convention. To access CE Central, go to [www.ihca.com/education](http://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.

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](mailto: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](mailto:acaldwell@ihca.com) or give her a call today!

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