More Winners Than CMS Expects Could Emerge Under PDPM

There could be more winners than previously expected under the new Patient-Driven Payment Model (PDPM), according to a recent article from Skilled Nursing News. Though the government has predicted a mixture of winners and losers under the new model, more providers could be on the winning side of the scale due to the impact of changes on their behavior (past and future), stated the piece.

Currently, under the Resource Utilization Group (RUG) system, operators may not be recording all of the necessary MDS data that will soon be essential to reimbursement, explained Sherri Robbins, managing consultant at BKD. Under PDPM the clinical condition of a patient will drive reimbursement for Medicare, rather than the number of therapy minutes that a patient receives.

“I’ve been in skilled nursing for 30-plus years and used to do MDS assessments when they were actually paper forms,” Robbins said on a recent webinar hosted by Skilled Nursing News. “I’ve spent the last several years here at BKD doing consulting. And it is common practice … when you have somebody who’s going to calculate into a rehab RUG group, the majority of the other areas on the MDS assessment don’t get a lot of attention.”

This gap between theory and the reality of MDS could lead to vastly different outcome than CMS originally projected for the results of the new model.

“A lot of the projections that CMS put out when they were first talking about the PDPM, and they were showing some facilities as winners and some facilities as losers — I’m really skeptical about that information,” said Robbins. “Simply because I think there were so many inaccurate MDS assessments out there that just focused mainly on the therapy-type services, and didn’t really take into consideration a lot of the clinical things that could have gone onto the MDS. So I think we’re going to have a lot more winners.”

To be on the winning side of the equation, providers will need to make sure they are capturing all of the patient characteristics correctly on the MDS. Making sure the entire MDS is correct, because the individual items rather than the therapy days/minutes will be driving the payment, is going to be essential.

Understanding PDPM, and how the changes in payment will also be crucial for providers.

“This change is a revolution, not an evolution,” John Harned, director at BKD, said on the webinar.
Additionally, in order for SNFs to prepare, he recommended establishing a dedicated team with specific, focused roles for individuals — with ICD-10 coding as the first area of priority, and MDS and therapy following closely behind.

To see more of what Harned and his cohorts at BKD recommend, click here to read the complete article from Skilled Nursing News.

**IHCA has several PDPM training options coming up in the next few months. Check out our seminars page online for more information.**

## How to Ensure Your Employees Aren't a Threat to HIPAA Compliance

Healthcare is the only industry in which the insider threat has been shown to be the greatest threat to critical data. Since the insider threat, extending from your workforce through management, is an evident risk, it is important to take a few steps to reduce the danger in your skilled nursing facility:

### Train your workforce and management

Addressing the threat presented by your nursing home staff requires education, as provided through HIPAA compliance training. Training is a mandatory element of both the HIPAA Privacy Rule (see 45 CFR § 164.530(b)(1)) and HIPAA Security Rule (see 45 CFR § 164.308(a)(5)).

Your training should address what is protected under the law (i.e., what is considered protected health information), why protection is necessary, and how to properly protect records so that HIPAA breaches do not occur. That last element is particularly important. Your staff will probably not purposely share confidential data. However, they may accidentally share it incorrectly.

Your HIPAA compliance training must address how to work with patient information in such a manner that will maintain its availability, integrity, and confidentiality whenever it is received, sent, or stored; detect and defend against any integrity or security threats that are reasonably foreseen; and safeguard against any unlawful disclosure or use that is reasonably foreseen.

It also cannot hurt to establish how real the problem is – that an organization’s staff is, according to a March 2018 industry study, a more significant source of risk than the outside world. More than half of electronic PHI breaches (58%) are due to insiders, said the research, which was based on analysis of 1368 security incidents throughout 27 nations. The study authors found that healthcare was the only sector in which the insider was the greatest threat to critical data.

### Direct your staff to notify you when they see HIPAA violations

A person who commits a healthcare violation within a nursing home facility may not be aware that they have done so, but PHI could still be compromised. It is critical to let your staff know that all errors or other security issues must be reported immediately. There should also be strict rules protecting people who report security concerns from retaliation.

### Automate compliance as possible

By automating compliance, you can straightforwardly reduce the likelihood that human error will occur, noted HIPAA Journal. For instance, if you are storing everything on encrypted devices, then you could have a system in place that blocks anyone from being able to save to an unencrypted drive. Automatic logoff is another simple step.

### Perform routine risk assessments

Conduct routine risk assessments. The HIPAA Security Rule mandates risk analyses by both covered entities (healthcare plans, providers, and data clearinghouses) and business associates (third parties handling patient data). Risk assessments confirm compliance with the parameters of HIPAA – specifically the technical, physical, and administrative safeguards. That third element, administrative safeguards, will address the issue of employee compliance. For help with this process, you can use the Security Risk Assessment Tool that was developed by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) in conjunction with the HHS.

### Protecting against human error

Since mistakes by employees are responsible for so many healthcare data breaches, it is critical to consider how to mitigate this risk. If your staff knows the fundamentals of HIPAA compliance and that reporting a violation is mandatory,
and if you routinely assess risk and automate as possible, you will greatly reduce your risk of an incredibly costly and stressful breach.

*This article is from McKnight’s Long Term Care News and was written by Moazzam Adnan Raja.*

Moazzam Adnan Raja is the Vice President of Marketing at Atlantic.Net. During Raja’s tenure, the Orlando-based, privately held hosting company has grown from having a primarily regional presence to garnering and developing attention nationwide and internationally. In collaboration with a skilled and dedicated team, Raja has successfully led a full spectrum of marketing campaigns, as well as handling PR work with major news outlets and the formation of key strategic alliances.

**Nursing Home Takes Lighter Approach to Address Wandering**

Legend Oaks Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center in New Braunfels, Texas, recently decided to try something new to help get a handle on wandering behaviors among residents. The center has a high number of dementia patients on their long term care wing, and was experiencing some issues with these patients wandering out the front door.

Facility leadership decided to install a bus stop along one of its busiest corridors. It’s made to look as if it’s from the 1930s, with an old-fashioned wooden bench, street posts and a map of the town.

“It works because they recognize the bus stop. It’s something familiar,” stated Jayna Owens, assistant director of rehab and a speech language pathologist. “In a skilled nursing facility everything is different and it’s not something they’ve seen before. It just gives them a sense of peace, helps them remember something familiar and allows them to calm down and decrease those wandering behaviors.”

According to the *McKnight’s* article, Legend Oaks first got the idea after learning about the popularity of such bus stops in Germany. Owens said they are exploring adding more stops in the facility, stating that the investment was minimal (less than $500). She encourages other providers to look into it.

“Really, you’re saving money for the amount of time staff is having to go back and redirect the patient,” she said. “It’s been great for our residents and the families have really enjoyed it because they’re seeing less behavior issues.”

Click here to view the full article from *McKnight’s*.

**Plunging Temperatures a Threat to People With Alzheimer's**

The polar vortex, which has been wreaking havoc on much of the country in the past few weeks, poses a special danger to individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia, stated a recent *HealthDay News* article.

“This type of weather can be hazardous for everyone, but even more so for individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease, who may have difficulty noticing temperature and weather changes or knowing who to call for help,” said Charles Fuschillo Jr., CEO and president of the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America.

"A few easy steps can go a long way to help family caregivers keep their loved one with Alzheimer's disease safe," he added in a foundation news release.

Knowing the signs of hypothermia is vital for caregivers. These include shivering, exhaustion, sleepiness, slurred speech, memory loss and clumsy motor skills. Additionally, wandering, which is a common problem with individuals who suffer from Alzheimer’s or dementia, can be even more dangerous when it is cold outside, so there should be action plans in place to avoid this or to remedy the situation quickly should a problem arise.

Extra caution is needed when using electric space heaters. These units can pose a fire risk, or a falls risk if the cords are not secure and out of the way. Also, steer clear of electric blankets because they could burn a patient’s skin without them even realizing the blanket is too hot.
Snow and ice can increase the risks for slips and falls, and many seniors, including those with Alzheimer’s and/or dementia can have vision problems that can make it harder for them to see if a walkway is slippery or wet. Keep pathways clear and accessible.

For additional tips on how to keep your residents or loved ones safe this winter, click here to read the full article from HealthDay News.

**Health Tip: What to Eat if You Have Arthritis**

If you have arthritis, there are foods that may help you feel better.

A diet that's rich in vitamins and minerals, and includes fruits, lean proteins, fish, vegetables, nuts and healthy oils may be most beneficial, the foundation says.

But it cautions against changing too much, too soon. Gradually swap out ingredients at each meal, and you may feel a big difference in how you feel and how well you can manage your pain and discomfort, the foundation adds.

*This article is from HealthDay News, last updated on January 25, 2019.*

**February 2019 Observances**

*February 4-8 is Pride in Food Service Week:* This annual event honors the hard work and dedication of dietary managers and their employees in long term care centers. Take the opportunity this week to thank your food service employees for the important role they play in the lives of the residents you all serve. Click here for more information.

*February 10-16 is National Cardiac Care Rehabilitation Week:* This weeklong observance celebrates the contribution that cardiovascular professionals make to health care and the importance of reducing the potentially devastating effects of heart disease. Visit www.aacvpr.org for more.

*February 14-21 is Alzheimer's and Dementia Staff Education Week:* This observation was created to bring awareness to the importance of both staff educators and their direct care staff being properly trained and certified in dementia care. Click here for more information.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**AHCA/NCAL Quality Summit: Housing Deadline Approaching**

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. The hotel deadline is Friday, February 15. Secure your hotel room now and take advantage of the room rate savings.

**2019 Independent Owner (IO) Leadership Conference: Housing Deadline Approaching**

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. Secure your hotel room by February 15 to take advantage of room rate savings.

The IO Conference immediately follows the 2019 Quality Summit and takes place at the same location. Register for both and save $50!

**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

IHCA Member Facility Annual Dues Deadline is Quickly Approaching
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.

FALSE IHCA Invoice Email Notifications
It has come to our attention several IHCA members have received emails appearing to be from IHCA staff members, with an attachment labeled as an unpaid invoice. These are scam emails. Please be aware, while it may display as coming from an IHCA staff member, but they are not generated from the IHCA server. Please do not open any attachments on these emails, and immediately report them as spam/phishing attempts. If you question about an invoice, please call the IHCA office.

22nd Annual Resources for Success – Save the Date – March 27 & 28
LTCNA is now accepting registrations for the 22nd Annual Resources for Success nursing conference. Join us March 27 & 28 at the Northfield Inn, Suites & Conference Center in Springfield for sessions on topics ranging from legislative and regulatory updates from IHCA’s public policy staff to the new PDPM and more. Day 2 will feature keynote speaker Cheryl Boldt discussing how nursing leaders can thrive through changes in health care.

Interested in exhibiting at the Resources for Success Expo? A select group of vendors will be chosen for this intimate show. Sign up today for your chance to meet key nursing staff from various Illinois facilities.

To view the brochure or the expo prospectus for this event, click here.

IHCA Public Policy Forum 2019 – March 27, 2019
Join us for this year’s event next month! IHCA policy staff and consultants will provide an overview of IHCA’s policy and political agenda for 2019, review potential opposition initiatives that we may face, discuss the possibilities of what is in store for our sector in any potential state budget and provide an open discussion on the various policy concerns facing the long term care profession. After the forum concludes, members will head to the Capitol to lobby their local legislators and the day will end with a reception at the Inn at 835. Mark your calendars now! Click here to view the brochure.

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.

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

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.

Latest IHCA VCast
This week’s episode featured Debbie and Matt discussing IHCA’s 2019 educational offerings. 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 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 or 800-252-8988.

IHCA Member Spotlight

IHCA Associate Member – Remedi SeniorCare
Remedi SeniorCare is a leading technology-enabled pharmacy innovator servicing long term care facilities and communities, as well as other adult-congregant living environments. Providing personalized, attentive service, the Remedi team helps customers stay focused on providing exceptional person-centered care and delivering better business results through advanced technology solutions and clinical expertise.

With years of proven long term care experience, Remedi supports more than 80,000 residents across 30 states with a keen focus on resident safety and medication administration accuracy while reducing unnecessary waste and cost for providers.

Remedi announced this week two new additions to the leadership team of their still developing location in Downers Grove, Illinois. The 50,000 square foot pharmacy is slated to open later this year, will dispense the company’s proprietary medication management system PAXIT® and will eventually employ more than 200 staff members.

Mike Milcarek, PharmD, MBA has been named general manager of this new location. He comes with more than two decades of experience in pharmacy management, and will be responsible for overseeing all of the location’s operations. Additionally, Chris Frederick will be joining the staff as operations manager. He also brings a wealth of experience and industry knowledge.

For more information, visit www.RemediRx.com.
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.