IHCA Member Centers Receive AHCA/NCAL Bronze Quality Awards

The National Quality Award Program, established by AHCA/NCAL in 1996, is based on the core values and criteria of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, which also serves as the foundation for the metric-based AHCA/NCAL Quality Initiative. The Baldrige framework helps organizations among different business sectors improve organizational effectiveness and achieve strategy-driven performance.

Last week, AHCA/NCAL announced the 2019 Bronze Award – Commitment to Quality recipients. There were nearly 600 facilities across the country who received a Bronze Award in 2019, including 10 IHCA member centers here in Illinois. Congratulations to all of our Bronze Award winners!!

- Crystal Pines Rehabilitation & Health Care
- Heritage Woods of Rockford
- John Evans, SLC
- Sunrise of Crystal Lake
- Sunrise of Naperville
- Sunrise of Willowbrook
- The Holmstad
- Transitional Care of Arlington Heights
- Willow Falls
- Windsor Park Manor Assisted Living

For more information about the Quality Award Program, click here.

Last Chance to Submit Your Maitland-Warner Scholarship Applications!

Do you know someone looking to further their nursing education? The Maitland-Warner Scholarship Fund can help with those education expenses. Applications are now being accepted!! Click here for more information.

*Applications for the 2019-2020 scholarships must be submitted by tomorrow, June 14, 2019 to be considered.

Click here to download printable forms. | Click here to submit application online.
Nursing Awards – Submit Your Nominations Today!

LTCNA is now accepting nominations for the 2019 LTCNA Nursing Awards. The awards will be presented during Ovations: A Celebration of Long Term Care Nurses at the 69th Annual IHCA Convention & Expo in Springfield in September. If you have an outstanding CNA, RN, MDS Coordinator or DON, nominate them today!!

Click here to find out more and to access the nomination forms. If you have any questions, contact Debbie Jackson at djackson@ihca.com or 800-252-8988.

2019 IHCA Excellence Award for Long Term Care Centers Nominations – Submit Today!

The IHCA Excellence Award for Long Term Care Centers is all about the care provided in our facilities every day. In addition to key data about the center, questions focus on information about the care being provided—census trends, antipsychotic usage, rehospitalization stats and more.

*Please note: while the nomination form is lengthy, answers may be brief.

We hope you will consider nominating your facility today!! To access the nomination forms, click here. If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Caldwell (acaldwell@ihca.com or 217-528-6455).

Residents Need Quicker Access to Helpful Medicines and Devices

It’s easy to take clinical innovation for granted. But there is no denying that various breakthroughs are making life better for both our residents and ourselves.

In recent decades, we have seen the introduction of medical lasers, 3D printed body parts, gene therapy, and a 40% drop in deaths caused by heart disease, to name but a few developments.

There is much to admire about the march of clinical innovation. Yet it remains hampered by one thing: ridiculous delay. By some estimates, 17 years typically elapse between the time of medical discovery and applied patient care.

Think of the possible medicines for diseases of the aging that are still working their way through the pipeline. Or medical devices that could foster better health and independence that remain in waiting. Combined, they represent a lot of death and suffering that could have potentially been avoided or reduced.

To be sure, there needs to be a balance between protecting public health and bringing health-preserving options to the market. But 17 years? C’mon!

Fortunately, things here might soon begin to change for the better.

As a way to get drugs and medical devices to patients quicker, the Department of Health and Human Services is pushing for new resources and public-private partnerships, as a part of a newly-announced ReImagine HHS: Accelerate Clinical Innovation Initiative.

Toward that effort, The Department will hold public meetings June 20-21 to solicit input and comment on opportunities to leverage departmental resources, increase collaboration, and to partner with private stakeholders to pick up the pace of clinical innovation.

If you are so moved, you may want to attend the event — and perhaps even offer a suggestion or two.

Regardless, this could be a watershed development for this sector.

We hear more and more these days about the importance of delivering quality care in skilled care settings. Surely, gaining quicker access to helpful medicines and devices will only help here.
Senior Living Providers See Opportunity to Expand Behavioral Health Services

The need for mental health services is high in the U.S., with nearly 47,000 Americans who committed suicide in 2017 and another 70,000 who died from drug overdoses, as well as another 17.3 million who had at least one depressive episode according to a Bloomberg Businessweek story. Inevitably some of these individuals were seniors, who often find themselves struggling with loneliness, depression, anxiety and/or other conditions.

In a recent article posted on the Senior Housing News website the news outlet covered a program being offered by a health care provider in New Jersey to address those mental health needs. Chelsea Senior Living is breaking the mold in assisted living by offering mental health services to residents in a dedicated area on its campus. For nearly 20 years the center has been offering a program called Crossings, which gives older adults a place to recuperate after experiencing an acute psychiatric episode, at their senior care center in East Brunswick.

Paid for through a private-pay model, Crossings provides an extended recovery program that combines assisted living services with specialized care for people who are managing chronic mental illness, depression, anxiety or have complex medication management needs. The program is specifically designed to aid up to 25 older adults at a time who have recently suffered an acute psychiatric episode, according to Ann Sullivan, regional health services director with Chelsea Senior Living.

"It provides them a safe place to go in the transition period back to the larger community or back to assisted living," Sullivan told Senior Housing News. "Referrals generally come from inpatient stay facilities … but we do get referrals from word of mouth, as well."

The Crossings was started in 2000, and may be the only program of its kind in an AL community in the Northeast, according to Sullivan. Crossings has its own dedicated staff, program schedule and dining area for the residents, but they can also mingle with the larger community’s residents if they choose. They also have the option of receiving medication management services or general therapy from a social worker or visiting psychiatrist.

"We saw a need for it based on the residents that were being admitted to assisted living," Sullivan said. "They would go back into their communities, and within months or days they would be back in short-term psychiatric because they weren’t taking their medications or having structure."

The need for more mental and behavioral services in senior living is great, according to Dr. Rajeev Kumar, who works as chief medical officer for Symbria, a therapy, rehab and pharmacy services company that works with around 150 post-acute and long term care providers across the U.S. Kumar is also a board member and secretary of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine.

"Because of the high prevalence of cognitive and psychological illnesses among this population as the residents age in place, the senior living industry is constantly trying to catch up," Kumar told SHN. "This [Crossings] program definitely is unique," he added. "While there are similar models elsewhere in the senior living landscape, this is by no means a common theme."

Lessening the burden

While the Crossings program helps fill a crucial service gap, the Senior Housing News piece noted, it’s also offered solely on a private-pay basis and is generally more expensive than the larger community’s assisted living services, Sullivan said. On the whole, however, there may be ways that other providers can lessen the behavioral health burden for residents through federal or state health care benefits.

For instance, Juniper Village at the Spearly Center, a 135-bed skilled nursing facility run by Juniper Communities in Denver, is a SNF that serves residents with behavioral and mental health needs. And, about half of the facility’s residents are older adults, according to Susan Pappas, the facility’s administrator.

"We’re almost like two facilities," Pappas told SHN. "We have all the clinical complexity of a skilled nursing facility while, simultaneously, all of the residents that we serve also have behavioral or mental health conditions."
Though this program’s behavioral health services are funded through the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF), CMS does offer some assistance. Last year CMS added behavioral health as a billable code to its Chronic Care Management (CCM) program. The program is meant to improve health outcomes and drive down the cost of care for people living with multiple chronic conditions, including behavioral health conditions. Additionally, CMS also has the Psychiatric Collaborative Care Model (CoCM), which enhances primary care in two ways: care management support for people receiving behavioral health treatment and adding to the primary care team regular psychiatric interspecialty consultation.

Senior living providers would do well to explore these and other benefits in looking for new ways to serve residents living with mental or behavioral conditions. There is also likely a significant financial upside for senior living providers who embrace care coordination and Medicare Advantage (MA).

“Behavioral issues, ones that aren’t thought to be acute, are important,” said Juniper founder and CEO Lynne Katzmann. “This is a new understanding of an existing issue and we’re provided some new tools to work with it.”

For more detailed information, click here to read the full article from Senior Housing News.

Sudoku, Crosswords Could Make Your Brain Years Younger

Mornings spent figuring out Sudoku or finessing a crossword could spell better health for aging brains, researchers say.

In a study of over 19,000 British adults aged 50 and over who were tracked for 25 years, the habit of doing word or number puzzles seemed to help keep minds nimble over time.

“We've found that the more regularly people engage with puzzles such as crosswords and Sudoku, the sharper their performance is across a range of tasks assessing memory, attention and reasoning,” said research leader Dr. Anne Corbett, of the University of Exeter Medical School.

“The improvements are particularly clear in the speed and accuracy of their performance,” she added in a university news release. "In some areas, the improvement was quite dramatic -- on measures of problem-solving, people who regularly do these puzzles performed equivalent to an average of eight years younger compared to those who don't."

Does that translate to protection against Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia? The study "can't say" at this point, Corbett said, "but this research supports previous findings that indicate regular use of word and number puzzles helps keep our brains working better for longer."

The study was conducted online. Participants were assessed each year, and they were asked how often they did word and number puzzles. They were also given a series of tests measuring attention, reasoning and memory, to help assess changes in their brain function.

The result: The more often participants did word and number puzzles, the better their performance on the brain tests, Corbett's group found.

Although the study couldn't prove cause-and-effect, some differences were significant. Brain function for those who did word puzzles was equivalent to 10 years younger than their actual age on tests of grammatical reasoning, and eight years younger than their age on tests of short-term memory.

The findings are outlined in two papers published May 16 in the International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, and add to results presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in 2018.

The study is now expanding into other countries, including the United States.

Brain experts in the United States weren't surprised by the findings.
The large, decades-long study "confirmed what your grandmother told you: 'If you don't use it, you lose it,'” said Dr. Gayatri Devi. She's a neurologist specializing in memory disorders at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

The fact that something as simple as puzzle-solving can take years off the brain is "a comforting finding," Devi said. She stressed that exercising the body can do the same. "Physical exercise is one proven way to keep our brains and our body healthy," she said.

Dr. Gisele Wolf-Klein directs geriatric education at Northwell Health in Great Neck, N.Y. She said interventions to help the brain stay healthy longer are sorely needed.

"As older patients live longer, the growing number of Alzheimer's patients represents a major challenge for health care systems worldwide," Wolf-Klein said. "Currently, the pharmaceutical industry has yet to propose any promising medical treatments. So, searches for lifestyle interventions that might preserve cognition [thinking] has become a priority."

“This study further supports many [prior] studies highlighting the benefits of mind exercises,” she said. It also "reinforces the need for all of us to keep our minds as active and engaged as possible."

*This article is from HealthDay News.*

**June 2019 Observances**

**June 13-19 is National Nursing Assistants Week:** This annual, weeklong observance offers health care providers the opportunity to honor nursing assistants for their hard work and dedication. For more information, [click here](#).

**June 24-30 is Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week:** This special observance promotes awareness and sensitivity to the needs of Americans who are deaf-blind, or hearing and vision impaired. [Click here](#) for more.

**June is National Safety Month:** This annual observance, hosted by the National Safety Council, was created to educate and influence behaviors surrounding the leading causes of preventable injuries and deaths. Visit [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org) for more information.

**June is Cataract Awareness Month:** At present, there are more than 24 million Americans, age 40 and older, who have cataract. It is the leading cause of blindness in the U.S. This month-long observance was created to spread awareness of the treatment options available for those who have cataract. [Click here](#) for more.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**National Assisted Living Week 2019 – September 8-14**

“A Spark of Creativity” is this year's theme for National Assisted Living Week, which hopes to inspire residents to tap into their creative side, whether through the arts or beyond.

Specifically, residents should explore art therapy as it can offer many benefits to older adults, such as improving cognitive and sensory-motor functions, fostering self-esteem and self-awareness, cultivating emotional resilience, enhancing social skills, and reducing and resolving conflicts and distress, according to the American Art Therapy Association.

Additionally, the theme aims to inspire assisted living staff to get creative in order to further person-centered care to residents. Staff at all levels are encouraged to offer ideas that could help improve each resident's quality of life. Assisted living communities across the country should organize activities and events throughout NALW that relate to the theme.

More information coming soon!

**AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo – Preliminary Program Now Available and Registration is Open**

The AHCA/NCAL Preliminary Program is now available. You can download a copy or review it [online](#). Watch your mailboxes this week for a copy. Get an overview of the exciting education sessions, guest speakers, networking events and Expo Hall. From PDPM to changes in Five-Star to the new Rules of Participation, you'll get concrete solutions and strategies that will make you feel like you have super powers:
• Extraordinary education sessions for SNF, AL, and post-acute care providers and staff. Earn CEs, network, and learn from your peers.

• Super speakers, like Opening Keynote Speaker Doris Kearns Goodwin, World-renowned Presidential Historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning Author.

• An out-of-this-world Expo Hall with hundreds of business partners providing demonstrations of the latest industry products and services.

Fill your toolbox with fresh ideas, inspiration, and action plans. Bring your staff and your family. There’s something for everyone.

**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**

**Check Out Our New LTC Workforce Development Initiative!**

Have you seen our new website—illinois.carefortheaging.org? IHCA has joined a group of fellow AHCA/NCAL state affiliates in a workforce development initiative that we hope will prove to be a fantastic resource for our member centers. The site offers visitors a variety of information on career opportunities available in long term care in Illinois. It also allows IHCA/ICAL and CDDACS member centers to access interest forms submitted by site visitors through the member portal ([click here](#) to register for the portal). Once you have logged in you will be able to search through submissions, and filter and export them by various search criteria, including zip codes, level of education, career area of interest, as well as set up alerts so you can receive email notifications when candidate interest forms meeting your criteria have been entered into the system.

We will be promoting this new resource, on our website and social media, and hope you will join us in this effort. [Click here](#) to view a flyer you can hang in your center or send to your local schools to promote the new site. Stay tuned for more information!

If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Caldwell (acaldwell@ihca.com).

**PDPM Training**

Did you miss the first round of our PDPM Training? We’re giving you another chance! This session will not only address the facility ramifications due to the change, but also discuss how accurate ICD-10 coding will be crucial to your success. This full day workshop will start with diagnosis coding, work through PDPM including a case study, and end with participants having a plan to implement in their facilities. These new sessions are scheduled for August 6 in Bloomington and August 7 in Mt. Vernon. Check the [seminars page](#) on our website for more information as it becomes available.

**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.

**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

Latest IHCA VCast
In this week's episode, Matt and Ashley give an update on the PAC events happening during the 69th Annual Convention & Expo in Springfield. 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

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!