Long Term Care Application and Appeals Meeting Information
The January report on the Long Term Care application backlog was provided to the group at this month’s LTC Application meeting. As you can see from the chart, almost all of the cases have officially moved to the hubs. The Department also provided us with a comparison chart of their progress with the assigned task. In addition to this chart, it was asked of the Department to include cases that have been appealed. In hopes to provide clarity in this process, we have provided below the answers we received from the state on several issues. If you have any additional questions please contact Matt Hartman or Ashley Snavely.

Appeals
As the back log in Medicaid applications continues to be processed down to a 90 day window, many of our members have seen a rise in denials leading to appeals. In order to leave an appeals appearance as a last resort, we encourage our facilities to engage in pre-appeal conferences with the department to resolve the matter in a more timely fashion. This conference can take place up to 60 days after a denial is received for a new applicant. In order to partake in these conferences, facilities should be added as one of the authorized representatives for the Medicaid resident by filling out the 2998 form. This will assure the facility will be up to date with paper work needed in order for an application to be approved and potentially avoid an appeal. When speaking with an appeals manager at your dedicated hub, they are permitted to share with the facility exactly what is needed in order to resolve the denial and the facility may assist the resident in acquiring these documents. In the case of redeterminations, the resident and facility has up to 90 days to reopen a case.

Simplification of Documents and Updating Communications
Medicaid will now accept receipt of SSI as verification of financial eligibility. Click here to read the full notice.

With great anticipation, Health Care and Family Services will soon be providing a list of upcoming Redeterminations to facilities on a monthly basis. This list will help facilities preview who will be receiving a redetermination letter that month. In addition, the Department plans to have a process created in MEDI that allows a facility to look up a resident’s Medicaid status (real time). Both of these programs are moving along slowly, but the fact the Department is finally coming into the 21st century is somewhat assuring.

Income Adjustments and MCOs
Both DHS and HFS are looking into the timeliness of income adjustments being placed into the system by caseworkers. If your facility is experiencing an increase in a resident’s income but the state has not adjusted it in their payments, please be careful to account for the money. It was discussed with the OIG’s office on how to proceed with the overpayment and a solution will soon be communicated to the providers. The process to update income adjustment under the MMAI program is the same process facilities use with the state, through the MEDI system. The provider groups have asked for an updated provider notice to be sent out to clarify this procedure with the Managed Care Organizations.
2MB Maximum Upload in ABE System
Facilities have experienced a 2MB capacity when uploading supporting documentation to the ABE application process. The Department is aware of this issue and has reached out to the provider groups for information. What documents do you find yourself having to continually upload? What is the general size of these documents either in pages or MB? Please send this information to Ashley Snively. Until this issue is resolved, your facility should use the most basic setting and lowest file size/resolution to upload these documents.

The group agreed that another informational meeting on LTC applications and timeframes would be beneficial to all. IHCA will distribute details of this meeting as soon as they are confirmed.

Introducing the New www.ihca.com!!

The new and improved IHCA website is here! We have finished putting the final touches on the new www.ihca.com and the site is up and running! This revamped version of the site was created with you, 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.

Be sure to check out some of our new features, such as: the Newsletters Archive, the QOTW Archive, the new IHCA Job Board! In addition to the fresh new design, we’ve given our IHCA Calendar a makeover, reorganized our homepage to allow for placement of key information and association announcements and reorganized information in a way that we hope will make for quick and easy use. Be sure to check it out! If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Caldwell.

The Number of Nurse Practitioners in the U.S. Has Nearly Doubled in Ten Years
According to a recent article from The Hill, the number of nurse practitioners in the United States has nearly doubled in the last decade—going from 106,000 in 2004 to 205,000 at the end of 2014. The national trade group for the profession, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) reported that more than 15,000 people graduated from nurse practitioner programs between 2012 and 2013.

AANP President Ken Miller stated that “The explosive growth of the nurse practitioner profession is a public health boon considering our nation’s skyrocketing demand for high-quality, accessible care,” and that the association is hoping to use the rising number of nurse practitioners in the country to help shape policy in Washington, D.C.

"The challenge now," he said, "will be right-sizing state and federal laws such that all patients will have full and direct access to nurse practitioners, and these expert and dedicated clinicians will be able to provide care to the top of their education and clinical training."

Moving forward, the AANP is expected to continue its push to pass legislation allowing nurse practitioners to order home health services for Medicare beneficiaries.

Too Much Sitting Can Be Hazardous, Even if You Exercise Regularly
Researchers believe that regular exercise doesn’t minimize the risks that come with sitting too much during the day as previously thought. After reviewing nearly 50 previous studies, Canadian researchers found that prolonged daily sitting was linked to significantly higher odds of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and death—even if the participants exercised regularly. They did note, however, that those who did little to no exercise faced even higher health risks.

"When we're standing, certain muscles in our body are working very hard to keep us upright," stated study author Aviroop Biswas, a Ph.D. candidate at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute-University Health Network, offering one theory about why sitting is detrimental. "Once we sit for a long time... our metabolism is not as functional, and the inactivity is associated with a lot of negative effects."
According to the researchers, the biggest health hazard stemming from prolonged sitting was a 90 percent higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. They also noted that one study in the review showed that fewer than eight hours of sitting time per day was associated with a 14 percent lower risk of potentially preventable hospitalization.

"[The review] gives us more data to help counsel our patients," stated Dr. Joshua Septimus, a clinical associate professor of internal medicine at Houston Methodist Hospital in Texas. "The idea that we could exercise for 15 or 20 minutes a day and that could completely erase any harms of a sedentary lifestyle for the other 23 hours a day is just too hopeful. This showed us that yes, there is some benefit to physical activity... but it's not enough."

**White House Conference on Aging to Hold Regional Forums**

The White House recently announced that a series of regional forums will be held around the country, leading up to the 2015 Conference on Aging. The Conference, which takes place every 10 years, acts as an opportunity for those involved with aging and care-giving communities to provide advice and policy recommendations to the executive departments and others on who to secure a better future for the elderly.

The regional forums will be held:
- February 19, 2015 – Tampa Bay, FL
- March 31, 2015 – Phoenix, AZ
- April 9, 2015 – Seattle, WA
- April 27, 2015 – Cleveland, OH
- May 28, 2015 – Boston, MA

**January 2015 Observances**

**This week is National Activities Professionals Week:** Activities professionals are key members of any long term care center team. Show them how much you appreciate them this week during National Activities Professionals Week (January 18-24)! Click here for information about the National Association of Activity Professionals.

**January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month:** According to the Glaucoma Research Foundation, more than 2.7 million Americans have glaucoma, and many of them don’t know that they have it. It is important to raise awareness of the importance of regular eye examinations to preserve vision. The World Health Organization estimates that 4.5 million people worldwide are blind due to glaucoma. Click here for more information.

**AHCA/NCAL Information**

**AHCA Kicks off Multimedia Advocacy Campaign**

AHCA launched its multimedia effort targeting Congress and government staff regarding the upcoming sustainable growth rate (SGR) deadline. This campaign has been created to show AHCA’s willingness to accept reductions for poor performance amongst some skilled nursing centers as an alternative to broad cuts to pay for the annual “doc-fix.” AHCA is actively bringing alternative proposals to Congress which seek to lower costs by rewarding high quality care.

AHCA will run TV spots inside the beltway, and ads on websites such as Roll Call, The Huffington Post, Washington Post, and Pandora. There will be ads placed in the Capitol South Metro station—a station frequented by Members of Congress and their staff as they arrive to work on the Hill—and host multiple congressional fly-ins for constituents.

The SGR, which will need to be updated March 31 in order to avoid a 21 percent rate cut to doctors’ Medicare reimbursement, is the largest annual funding fight in health care and routinely costs in the tens of billions. No decisions have yet been made on how long the patch will last or how it will be paid for.

**One Week Left to Apply for Bronze Quality Award! Submit Your Application Today!**

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!

Tomorrow is the Last Day 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 tomorrow, January 23, 2015! Don’t delay!

Early Bird Registration for the 2015 Independent Owner Leadership Conference Coming Up Soon
The Independent Owner (IO) Leadership Conference, scheduled for March 11-13, 2015 in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, is a fantastic opportunity to network, learn new strategies that will help you meet your 2015 goals and earn CEs. This year’s theme is How To Survive Medicaid Managed Care as an Independent Owner. The deadline to register prior to the event is February 9, 2015. Click here to view the agenda and here for registration information.

Check Out the AHCA/NCAL Online Store for New Resources to Kick Start 2015 in Your Facility
Nursing Procedure Guide for Long-Term Care: Make sure your center is prepared for surveyor visits, providing quality resident care, training of new nurses and more! This resource can help you do all of these things by providing you with 395 expert-reviewed, regulatory-compliant procedures.

Caring for People with Challenging Behaviors: Having to deal with the challenges of caring for patients and/or residents who may have behavioral issues is nothing new in long term care. This popular resource will help your professional caregivers learn powerful and effective ways to prevent, reduce or eliminate the challenging behaviors of care recipients. Click here to check out these guides and other resources in the new releases section of AHCA/NCAL’s online bookstore.

IHCA Association Information
Call for Presentations Working Correctly After Submission Issues Were Fixed
It recently came to our attention that there was a glitch with the online Call for Presentations for the 65th Annual Convention and Expo. Unfortunately, we were unaware of the problem and any information that was submitted online prior to yesterday, January 21, 2015, was not captured by the online system. If you submitted a speaker proposal before yesterday, please resubmit your information in order to be considered for the event in September. Click here to access the online form. We apologize for any inconvenience and appreciate your patience with this process. If you have any questions, please contact Kelli Showalter at kshowalter@ihca.com or Debbie Jackson at djackson@ihca.com.

IHCA to Offer Special Regulatory Web Seminar—For IHCA Members Only!!
Next month, IHCA Regulatory Director Bill Bell will offer a special web seminar on a variety of regulatory topics—just for our IHCA members! He will update participants with the latest information from IDPH and CMS, go over regulatory issues/changes that effect long term care and more! Click here for more information on: “Thou Shalt Not”... An IHCA Regulatory Update Web Seminar | February 3, 2015 | 10 – 11 a.m.

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. Click here to view the brochure for more information.

IHCA News Brief – Month in Review – December 2014
Each week our Monday morning News Brief contains a treasure trove of information. We know that it is a lot to sift through and have been making changes to get the Hot Issues to you in an easy to use and efficient manner. Now, we have taken the top issues from the past month and put them together in one brief document. Click here to read the IHCA News Brief—December 2014 in Review!
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 and you may see your story in an upcoming issue!

IHCA Member Spotlight
IHCA Associate Member – Gordon Food Service
Since 1897, Gordon Food Service (GFS) has delivered uncompromising quality and heartfelt service for their customers. The company began as a simple butter-and-egg delivery service, and has grown to become the largest family business in the foodservice industry by upholding the same approach for over 115 years—remaining passionately committed to the people they serve. Today, they serve foodservice operators within the Midwest, Northeast, Southeast and Southwest regions of the United States and coast-to-coast in Canada. Partnering with health care and education, as well as independent and chain restaurants, GFS helps their customers create food experiences that people choose, enjoy and remember. Their extensive line includes products, services and technology designed specifically for effective and efficient health care food service, environmental services and laundry operations. They also operate more than 170 Gordon Food Service Stores in the U.S., which are open to the public and provide restaurant-quality products and friendly, knowledgeable service without a membership fee.

For more information, please visit them on the Web at: http://www.gfs.com/en.

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!