



Weekly Roundup

...Reporting the state and national long-term care news

Please disseminate relevant information to the appropriate department.

☐ Administration ☐ Nursing ☐ Dietary ☐ Activities ☐ Social Services
☐ Rehabilitation ☐ Housekeeping ☐ Maintenance ☐ Laundry

Friday, November 4, 2022

ANHA NEWS

ANHA Office Schedule

The ANHA office will be closed Monday, November 7 and Tuesday, November 8 due to the ANHA Owners' Meeting and Board Retreat. The office will re-open at 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, November 9.

ANHA to Start Infection Preventionist E-mail Group

ANHA's Director of Infection Control and Prevention, Leigh Ann Hixon, has been busy training and getting acclimated to long-term care. She would like to start a specific Infection Preventionist e-mail group so she can share information and reminders to facilities and assist them with infection control matters. If you would like to be added to the email group, please e-mail Leigh Ann at lahixon@anha.org. She hopes to start communicating reminders and resources for facilities soon.

ANHA Fall Webinar Series – two webinars remaining!

The Alabama Nursing Home Association is hosting weekly webinars this fall. The webinars occur every Wednesday from 1:30-3:00 p.m. Each webinar is approved for 1.5 hours for NHAs and 1.8 hours for nurses. Listed below are the programs, sponsors and registration links.

Wednesday, November 9 – Triple Point Industries

Water Safety Plans for Nursing Homes

Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4137034969702227725>

Wednesday, November 16

OBRA PASRR Review and Updates

Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5096905322215813135>

November Health Care Observances Posted Online

The health care observances for November and the following month have been posted on the ANHA's website: <https://anha.org/observances/>. The page is regularly updated with timely health care recognition events. Please make sure the appropriate members of your staff are aware of this webpage.

Medicaid Cost Reports

The Alabama Nursing Home Association is collecting Medicaid cost reports for analysis by its independent reimbursement consultant firm, Bishop & Company. As in the past, the reimbursement consultant will provide you a detailed analysis of your costs compared to the costs of other facilities of a similar size. ANHA cannot overstate the importance of sending in your cost report. In order to negotiate with Medicaid on various issues, we need to have accurate information concerning the profession. This information has proved very beneficial in the past. Please send a copy of your 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022 Medicaid Cost Report to kmagdon@anha.org or by mail to:

Alabama Nursing Home Association
4156 Carmichael Road
Montgomery, Alabama, 36106
Attn: Katrina Magdon

STATE NEWS

RN Single State License Renewals Due December 31, 2022

The Alabama Board of Nursing (ABN) reminds registered nurses (RN) holding Alabama single state licenses (SSLs) that they are required to renew no later than December 31, 2022. Unfortunately, at this point, renewal numbers remain critically low, with nearly 64,000 RNs still having failed to renew their licenses.

As a reminder, the rules have changed this year, and renewal will close at 4:30 p.m., December 31. Any SSL RN who fails to complete renewal prior to that time will lapse and will no longer be legally authorized to practice. You may direct questions or concerns to Licensing@abn.alabama.gov.

COVID-19/INFECTION CONTROL UPDATES

Clarification on When a Facility Needs to Make Intervention Changes Based on Community Transmission

The ANHA has received several emails and calls regarding Intervention changes needed based on Community Transmission rates. We have contacted ADPH, and they contacted CDC to make sure we are all on the same page with interpretations. Listed below is the question asked and the answer received:

When should health care facilities make changes to interventions based on changes in community transmission levels?

Some CDC infection prevention and control recommendations for healthcare settings are based on [Community Transmission levels](#). In general, healthcare facilities should consider checking their local Community Transmission level weekly. When a healthcare facility's Community

*Transmission level **increases** and the increase results in a change in the [recommended interventions](#), the new interventions should be implemented as soon as possible. When a health care facility's Community Transmission levels **decrease** into a category that corresponds with relaxation of an intervention, facilities should consider confirming the reduction is sustained, by monitoring for at least two weeks, before relaxing the intervention.*

NATIONAL NEWS

Changes to Reporting Injuries and Illnesses

Employers must connect their [Injury Tracking Account](#) to a [Login.gov](#) account to submit their 2022 workplace injury and illness data next year (see the Safety Q&A below for more information).

Why must employers create a Login.gov account to submit their 2022 workplace injury and illness data to OSHA?

- Login.gov is a secure sign-in service that allows the public to access government applications using one account and password. Since October 2022, the OSHA [Injury Tracking Application](#) (ITA) requires you to create an ITA account and then a [Login.gov](#) account to report your establishment's injury and illness data.
- You must use the same email address for your Login.gov account that you use to access ITA to connect the ITA application with Login.gov. If you already have a Login.gov account with the same email address as your ITA account, select the “Sign in with Login.gov” button on the “Injury Tracking Application Login” screen and login to the ITA application. Step-by-step instructions on how to create your Login.gov account are [available online](#).

If you have additional questions, please visit our [FAQs](#).

Implementation and Use of Enhanced Barrier Precautions in Nursing Homes

The CDC invites you to a webinar discussing Enhanced Barrier Precautions in nursing homes. [Enhanced Barrier Precautions](#) protect nursing home residents and staff from germs that can cause serious infections and are hard to treat.

Join the CDC November 15, 2022, from 12:00-1:00 p.m. CST for a detailed review and discussion about this CDC infection prevention and control recommendation. In addition, hear directly from a long-term care Infection Preventionist about her successes and challenges implementing Enhanced Barrier Precautions in several nursing homes. Presentations will be followed by a conversation with the experts about frequently asked questions from the field.

Featured Presenters:

- Abimbola (Bola) Ogundimu, DrPH, RN, CIC, CPHQ; Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion, CDC
- Heather Jones, DNP, NP-C; Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion, CDC
- Linda Behan BSN, RN, CIC; Consultant; Long Term Care Infection Prevention, LLC

- Kara Jacobs Slifka, MD, MPH; Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion, CDC

[Click here](#) to register.

Updated CMS Resources

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) updated resources on the Nursing Homes website. Specifically, the Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Reform of Requirements for Long-Term Care Facilities portion of the website.

Included in these updates is the [State Operations Manual Appendix PP-Guidance to Surveyors for Long Term Care Facilities](#). Other revisions include:

- [CMS-802](#) – Matrix for Providers
- [LTCSP Initial Pool Care Areas](#) – Resident Interview Care Areas and Probes, Resident Observation Care Areas and Probes, Record Review Care Areas and Probes
 - Downloads as a Zip file
- [Initial Surveys](#) – Provides Instructions for the Interim LTCSP Initial Survey and Certification Process
 - Downloads as a Zip file
- [Survey Resource Folder](#) to include updated Critical Element Pathways
 - Downloads as a Zip file

For a complete list of all of the updates please visit: [Nursing Homes](#).

CMS Releases Revisions to the Special Focus Facility Program

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released a revised Special Focus Facility (SFF) Program policy memo [QS0-23-01-NH](#) and updated the monthly [SFF posting](#). These revisions are meant to increase the requirements for completion of the program and enforcement for facilities that do not demonstrate improvement.

A high-level overview of key changes made in the revised memo is as follows:

- **Adding staffing levels as a consideration for SFF selection:** CMS has directed states to consider a facility's staffing level when selecting facilities for the SFF program. CMS recommends if a state is considering two candidates with a similar compliance history, it should select the facility with lower staffing ratios/rating as the SFF.
- **Increased Criteria for Completion of the Program:** CMS has added a threshold that prevents a facility from exiting based on the total number of deficiencies cited. To graduate from the program, facilities must complete two consecutive standard health surveys, with no intervening complaint, LSC, or EP surveys with 13 or more total deficiencies, or any deficiencies cited at scope and severity of "F" or higher.
- **Involuntary Termination:** SFFs with deficiencies cited at immediate Jeopardy (IJ) on any two surveys (standard health, complaint, LSC, or EP) while in the SFF program, will now be considered for discretionary termination.
- **Increasing enforcement actions:** CMS will impose immediate sanctions on an SFF that fails to achieve and maintain significant improvement in correcting deficiencies on the first and each subsequent standard health, complaint and LSC/EP survey after a facility becomes an SFF. Enforcement sanctions will be of increasing severity for SFFs

demonstrating continued noncompliance and failure to demonstrate good faith efforts to improve performance.

- **Incentivizing sustainable improvements:** CMS will closely monitor graduates from the SFF program for a period of three years to ensure improvements are sustained. For SFFs that graduate but continue to demonstrate poor compliance identified on any survey (e.g., actual harm, substandard quality of care, or IJ deficiencies), CMS may use its authority to impose enhanced enforcement options, up to, and including discretionary termination from the Medicare and/or Medicaid programs.

CMS Releases Memo on Fire Safety Evaluation System

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized new mandatory values in August 2022 for the Fire Safety Evaluation System (FSES). CMS this week released revisions to the [FSES memo](#), which negate the need for a waiver and now allow SNFs to once again achieve a passing score on the FSES without any impact on the fire safety of the facility.

Revised CMP Reinvestment Application and State Plan Resources

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has revised the CMP application and State plan resources on the CMS Civil Money Penalty Reinvestment webpage. The revisions clarify operational instructions such as prohibited uses of CMP funding, requiring letters of support from all nursing homes participating in CMP-sponsored projects, and providing new or updated responses to the FAQs. [Read More](#).

Updated Three-Day Stay Resource Now Available

The American Health Care Association (AHCA) has updated its three-day stay benefit period waiver resource to incorporate the recent PHE extension and ICD-10 guidance updates. [Read More](#).

SNF Provider Preview Reports – Now Available

The Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Provider Preview Reports have been updated and are now available. These reports contain provider performance scores for quality measures, which will be published on [Care Compare](#) and [Provider Data Catalog \(PDC\)](#) during the **January 2023** refresh. The data contained within the Preview Reports are based on quality assessment data submitted by SNFs from **Quarter 2, 2021 through Quarter 1, 2022**. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage among Healthcare Personnel (HCP) measure reflect data from **Quarter 1, 2022**. The data for the claims-based measures will display data from **Quarter 3, 2019 through Quarter 4, 2019** and **Quarter 3, 2020 through Quarter 2, 2021** for this refresh, and for the SNF Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) measure, from **Quarter 4, 2020 through Quarter 3, 2021**.

Providers have until **November 14, 2022**, to review their performance data. Corrections to the underlying data will not be permitted during this time. However, providers can request Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) review of their data during the preview period if they believe the quality measure scores that are displayed within their Preview Reports are inaccurate.

To locate the SNF Provider Preview reports, please follow these steps below:

1. Log into the CMS Network (CMSNet) using the CMSNet login credentials.

2. Log into the Certification and Survey Provider Enhanced Reporting (CASPER) application using the Quality Improvement and Evaluation System (QIES) login credentials.
3. Select the **Folders** button from the menu bar in CASPER and a list of your folders will display.
4. Select the facility-specific, non-Validation Report (non-VR) folder. These folders will be named in the following manner:
For Nursing Home-based SNFs:
[State Code] LTC [Facility ID] (i.e., MD LTC XYZ123)
5. The Preview Reports are listed in descending order by Date Requested within this folder.
6. Select the desired preview report link to view the report.

For questions related to accessing your facility's provider preview report, please reach out to the iQIES helpdesk at iqies@cms.hhs.gov or call 1-877-201-4721. For questions about SNF Quality Reporting Program (QRP) Public Reporting, please email SNFQRPPRQuestions@cms.hhs.gov.

OTHER NEWS

New from AHCA Fully Customizable Emergency Preparedness Tool

Responding to events like hurricanes, floods, violence, and the COVID-19 pandemic requires careful planning and preparation. AHCA's [*Emergency Preparedness Plan: Best Practice Guide and Template*](#) is a comprehensive tool designed to assist long-term care organizations develop and maintain an effective Emergency Program. Fully **customizable**, this **downloadable** resource serves as a complete guide for review and site-specific tailoring. The cost is \$395.00.

Companion Webinar Emergency Preparedness Plan

This [webinar](#) provides an overview of the critical components of a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan. It is designed to walk you through the steps necessary to ensure the safety of your facility in the next emergency based on the newly updated *Emergency Preparedness Plan: Best Practice Guide and Template*.

This [ahcancaLED webinar](#) is free to AHCA/NCAL members.

Self-Care for Caregivers

The workforce crisis and COVID-19 have exacerbated the demands and pressures faced by staff creating even more challenges for those who work in long term care. Self-care is an essential and purposeful retention strategy. *ahcancaLED* has launched two new online courses to address the need for self-care and resiliency. These mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques net tangible results that can help put self-care back into daily routines and support employees in what they do best – caring for others.

[Improving Staff Resiliency and Retention: An Action Plan that Works](#) is aimed at reinvigorating individual passion for long term care by providing the tools and resources needed to decrease stress levels and help other team members do the same.

After attending this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify stressful situations within their environment.
- Employ stress reduction techniques that work.
- Decrease their overall perceived stress levels.
- \$199 for members and \$249 for non-members. 3.50 NAB CEs and 3.0 contact hours through the Iowa Board of Nursing.

[Self-Care: The Secret to Surviving!](#) is an abbreviated course meant for frontline staff struggling with daily work and life stresses. The session includes an interactive quiz to help individuals measure their stress levels followed by strategies that can be individualized to cope with that stress. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to make this course available to staff members experiencing stress and to use it as preventative tool to help employees.

- \$25 for AHCA/NCAL members and \$65 for non-members. This 34-minute learning session does not come with CEs.

Individuals will need to login to *ahcancaLED* with their AHCA/NCAL usernames and passwords to register for either course. For assistance obtaining usernames and passwords, members should e-mail educate@ahca.org with their name and facility contact information.

2023 National Quality Award Applications Available Now

November 10 is the intent to apply deadline

The [AHCA National Quality Award Program](#) is excited to announce that the 2023 application year is now open. For the first time, application packets are available three months earlier than previous years so that skilled nursing care centers and assisted living communities can begin to prepare. We encourage members to take advantage of this additional time to [download application packets](#) and materials and to begin planning, reviewing and gathering relevant data.

Why apply

The [National Quality Award Program](#) is a rigorous three-level process (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) that evaluates an organization's capabilities against nationally recognized standards for excellence. The program provides a pathway to improved outcomes in areas including care, workforce, leadership and operations.

The value of applying

- An outside perspective
- Learning from the feedback
- Team building
- Becoming stronger and more resilient
- A focus on results
- Recognition and pride
- A commitment to the process leads to better occupancy rates and prepare providers to meet regulatory demands.

Dates to know

- November 10 – ITA deadline
- January 26, 2023 – Application deadline

- Summer 2023 – Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award notifications

If you have questions, email the National Quality Award team at qualityaward@ahca.org.

Revenue Cycle Management Academy Helps SNFs Stay Paid

In the coming months, federal aid will dwindle as the government and states move toward a post-pandemic normal order of business. As SNFs continue to struggle with sluggish occupancy and workforce challenges, ensuring that every dollar earned for care delivery is retained will be imperative.

AHCA’s online training program titled [Revenue Cycle Management \(RCM\) Academy](#) takes a holistic interdisciplinary approach toward SNF revenue management. RCM Academy helps develop concrete strategies to secure earned dollars and to “stay paid” when thinking about Managed Care payment recoveries. RCM Academy helps SNFs:

- Prepare for the eventual phase down of COVID-related government assistance
- Stabilize and better manage a predictable revenue flow relative to overhead
- Stay paid when considering Medicare Advantage Plan payment recovery trends.

RCM can be implemented throughout a building or more broadly as an organization-wide approach to enhance revenue by minimizing losses from payments that too often are unnecessarily lost or overlooked. RCM team members will be able to apply their practical RCM knowledge and implement daily processes.

Effective RCM requires a team approach beyond just facility billing office or corporate office staff. AHCA recommends that all SNF administrators, assistant administrators, DONs, ADONs, MDS coordinators, nurse leaders and admissions staff enroll in RCM Academy too. Flexible 2022 “AHCA Member-Only” pricing options for RCM Academy include:

- 1 Individual Registration with 6.75 NAB CEs, \$350
- 2+ Individuals (Same facility or corporate office) with 6.75 NAB CEs, \$300 per person
 - Individuals should contact educate@ahca.org to request this group discount.
- Single AHCA Member Only Facility Registration with Unlimited 2022 Facility Staff Access (NO NAB CEs OFFERED) \$1,000

Additional bonus RCM webinars will be offered throughout 2022 for all RCM Academy registrants. Individuals will need to login to *ahcancaLED* with their AHCA/NCAL usernames and passwords to register for [Revenue Cycle Management Academy](#). For assistance obtaining usernames and passwords, members should e-mail educate@ahca.org with their name and facility contact information.

Alabama Nursing Home Association

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Links:

Alabama Nursing Home Association <http://www.anha.org>

AL Board of Examiners of Nursing Home Administrators <http://www.alboenha.alabama.gov>

AL Department of Public Health <http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov>

CMS <http://cms.gov>