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nebraska now

February 26, 2020

UPCOMING EDUCATION

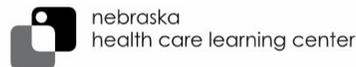
- [PDPM Master Class: Applying Dollar Values to PDPM Characteristics and Avoiding Top Missed Opportunities with Case Studies](#) – 3/3/20
- [Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care Seminar \(Kearney\)](#) – 3/3/20-3/4/20
- [LPN IV Therapy and Basic Skills Course \(Kearney\)](#) – 3/11/20-3/12/20
- [NHPCA Annual Conference](#) – 3/17/20-3/18/20
- [LPN IV Therapy and Basic Skills Course](#) – 4/1/20-4/2/20
- [PDPM Master Class: Effective Meetings for PDPM \(UR/Medicare, Clinical, Triple Check\)](#) – 4/7/20

QUICK LINKS

- [Education](#)
- [Nurse Aide and Med Aide Store](#)
- [Care PAC](#)
- [Career Center](#)
- [Vendor Search](#)
- [Affordable Care Act Scholarships](#)



FEBRUARY FEATURED PRODUCT



ACTIVITY DIRECTOR TRAINING

HOME STUDY VERSION

A training program for the Nebraska Nursing Facility Association offered through the Nebraska Health Care Learning Center The Nebraska Health Care Learning Center (NHCLC) – An Affiliate of the Nebraska Health Care Association

[Activity Director Training – Home Study Version](#)

Member Price: \$412.00



member benefits

EDUCATION

Members receive major discounts on courses, workshops, conventions, and webinars.

NNFA/NALA also provides:

- general and professional liability insurance
- infection preventionist training
- dementia care programs
- gero nurse prep

NNFA/NALA

The graphic features a light blue background with two white birds in flight. The word "spring" is written in a cursive font, with "2020" below it. The word "CONVENTION" is in large, bold, blue letters. A banner below says "KEARNEY · APRIL 27-29". On the right, a green ribbon says "SAVE THE DATE". At the bottom, there are four logos for the member associations: Nebraska Nursing Facility Association, Nebraska Assisted Living Association, Nebraska Association of Home Health Agencies, and Licensed Practical Nurse Association of Nebraska.

SAVE THE DATE: 2020 ANNUAL SPRING CONVENTION IN KEARNEY

The Nebraska Nursing Facility Association, Nebraska Assisted Living Association, Nebraska Association of Home Health Agencies, and Licensed Practical Nurse Association of Nebraska will host the Annual Spring Convention, April 27-29, 2020, in Kearney. More information about the convention will be available soon.

Follow NNFA/NALA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#) for the latest updates.

NEBRASKA HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE APPROACHING

More than 40 scholarships are offered annually by the Nebraska Health Care Foundation (NHCF) to NNFA/NALA member facility staff seeking education in long-term care. Some scholarships are also available to facility staff family members. Apply through AwardSpring [here](#) by **March 8, 2020**. More information is available [here](#).

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN: NNFA/NALA SPRING AWARDS

Nebraska Nursing Facility Association (NNFA) and Nebraska Assisted Living Association (NALA) offer five awards at the annual NNFA/NALA Spring Awards Luncheon, April 29, 2020, in Kearney:

- [NNFA Resident of the Year Award](#)
- [NALA Resident of the Year Award](#)
- [NNFA/NALA Business Associate Member \(Vendor\) of the Year Award](#)
- [NNFA Programming Award](#)
- [NALA Programming Award](#)

To submit a nomination, click [here](#). Nominations close **March 20, 2020**.

SPRING TRADE SHOW REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Connect with 500 health care professionals from across Nebraska at the NNFA/NALA/NAHHA/LPNAN Spring Trade Show, April 28, 2020, in Kearney. Booth registration is now open! Register [here](#).

Download the 2020 Trade Show Prospectus [here](#). For more information, contact Maddie Hall, Marketing and Vendor Relations Coordinator, at MaddieH@nehca.org.

REGISTRATION OPEN: 2020 NHPCA CONFERENCE

The early registration deadline for the [2020 NHPCA "Living a Good Life...at the End of Life" Annual Conference](#) is March 3. The event will be held March 17-18 at Embassy Suites in Lincoln.

Attendees can choose from a variety of education sessions to acquire a maximum of 12.5 continuing education hours in three tracks (social/spiritual, peer-reviewed nursing, and other). The conference will also feature nationally respected keynote speakers, an awards luncheon, trade show, raffle, and silent auction. A special highlight this year is the opportunity to purchase discounted tickets to an evening performance of traditional Irish music and step dancing at the Lied Center for Performing Arts – a perfect way to put you in the St. Patrick's Day spirit. Click [here](#) for more information.

WEBINAR RECORDING AVAILABLE: NURSING FACILITY RATE METHODOLOGY UPDATE

On Feb. 20, state leaders presented information to members on the new Medicaid nursing facility rate methodology that will go into effect July 1, 2020. More than 100 members joined the webinar to listen to the information and ask questions. A recording of the webinar is now available [here](#). Access the presentation slides [here](#).

Presenters:

- Jeremy Brunssen, Interim Director, Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care
- Heath Boddy, President and CEO, Nebraska Health Care Association
- Jenifer Acierno, President and CEO, LeadingAge Nebraska
- Roger Thompson, Reimbursement Consultant, Seim Johnson

Learn more about the Department of Health and Human Services nursing facility payment project [here](#).

NUTRITION IN THE PREVENTION OF TREATMENT OF PRESSURE INJURIES

BY LISA LOGAN, ENTERAL PROGRAM MANAGER/NUTRITION SUPPORT CLINICIAN, MCKESSON MEDICAL-SURGICAL

The role of nutrition in pressure injury (PI) prevention and treatment is a well-recognized factor and an essential component of wound management. Unfortunately, proper nutritional support is often the “forgotten element” that is necessary in all phases of wound healing. Wounds will not heal without proper nutrition, and malnutrition is a key risk factor in the development of wounds. Protein Energy Malnutrition will result in a marked increase in the incidence of PIs. According to the National Pressure Advisory Panel (NPUAP), the prevalence of wounds or any chronic, non-healing wound, such as a PI, surgical site wound, trauma, or burn injury is a serious health care problem. Therefore, employees that work in the supply and distribution industry need to understand how they can provide solutions for customers to help prevent and treat wounds. [Read more here.](#)

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Ambassador Health Lincoln was featured by *KETV NewsWatch 7* in an incredible story of strength showcasing how skilled nursing facilities provide vital care to Nebraskans. Read more [here](#).

Shalynne Hohnholt, director of nursing at Mid-Nebraska Lutheran Home, was featured by *Albion News* for her recent appointment to the NNFA/NALA Quality and Regulatory Committee. Read more [here](#).

NHCF SEEKS GENTLY USED MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

NHCF seeks donations of gently used medical equipment – **specifically wheelchairs**. All donated equipment will be used for long-term care education and training cases. If you would like to donate an item, contact Connie Knorr, Director of Professional Development, at ConnieK@nehca.org or 402-435-3551. NHCF will pick up donations within 100 miles of Lincoln. Thank you in advance for your support!

NHCF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donation may be tax deductible.

WELCOME, ADMINISTRATORS

NNFA/NALA shares the following changes to a member administrator position:

- Jessica Frederickson — Hillcrest Country Estates Grand Lodge, Papillion
- Sarah Watson — Rose Lane Home, Loup City

Congratulations to these individuals on their new roles! To notify NNFA/NALA of administrator updates, contact Karen Jefferson at KarenJ@nehca.org.

QUALITY

QUARTERLY INFLUENZA VIRUS VACCINE CODE UPDATE

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released the [Quarterly Influenza Virus Vaccine Code Update](#) for physicians, providers, and suppliers billing Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) for influenza vaccine services provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

The influenza virus vaccine code set is updated on a quarterly basis. The update provides instructions for payment and edits for Medicare's Common Working File (CWF) and the Fiscal Intermediary Shared System (FISS) to include and update new or existing influenza virus vaccine codes. In addition, the update instructs MACs to modify existing editing to allow an influenza and a Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV) vaccination on the same date on separate roster bills. Make sure your billing staffs are aware of these changes.

REGULATIONS & REIMBURSEMENT

SPECIAL ALERT FOR MEDICAID WAIVER ASSISTED LIVING SUBJECT TO 'HEIGHTENED SCRUTINY'

CMS published a [Final Rule](#) for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) on March 17, 2014, that required each state to review its policies, procedures, and settings (including assisted living facilities) to determine compliance with the HCBS rule and, if necessary, make any changes to come into compliance prior to March 17, 2022. Each state is also required to submit a State Transition Plan for CMS approval of any changes needed based on the rule. The final version of [Nebraska's State Transition Plan](#) was submitted to CMS on Sept. 27, 2019, and is awaiting approval.

For a Nebraska Medicaid Waiver-certified assisted living facility that is located on the same campus as a co-owned/operated nursing facility or hospital, the new rule requires that it be subject to "heightened scrutiny" by the State Medicaid Agency and CMS to determine whether it meets the 2014 HCBS regulations.

DHHS will be sending letters in the following weeks to the **22 Nebraska "heightened scrutiny"** assisted living facilities it has identified as needing to submit additional information. The additional information on policies, procedures, and/or practices is needed in order to establish these facilities qualify as HCBS, and therefore, are entitled to receive continued Medicaid Waiver payment.

NHCA has received confirmation from DHHS officials that if an assisted living facility that is subject to "heightened scrutiny" **does not have dedicated assisted living staff in the facility all hours of the day**, and instead allows staff to clock out of the adjacent nursing facility and clock in to the assisted living facility, **this is allowable under the following conditions:**

1. Dedicated staff are not needed in the assisted living facility during certain times (e.g., nighttime) based on residents' needs; and
2. The staff that move from the nursing facility to the assisted living facility are trained in meeting the needs of assisted living residents based on HCBS person-centered principles.

Should your facility receive the above referenced letter from DHHS, NHCA encourages a prompt and complete response. If you have questions or would like additional clarification on the information needed by DHHS, please contact Cindy Kadavy, Senior Vice President of Policy, Research, and Reimbursement at cindyk@nehca.org or 402-435-3551.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S 2021 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

On Feb. 10, 2020, President Trump released his proposed budget request for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21). The President's proposed budget is a blueprint for the federal FY21 containing an array of provisions which may or may not be implemented. Proposals in the President's budget are either legislative or administrative. Legislative proposals in the President's budget follow the same process as all legislation — a Congressional sponsor must be found, hearings are required, it must receive a price tag (or score)

from the Congressional Budget Office, and it must be voted upon. Other provisions are proposed as administrative initiatives, which may be acted upon by the relevant federal agency via rulemaking or, in some instances, sub-regulatory guidance such as State Medicaid Directors Letters.

Legislative proposals of note:

- Medicaid Block Grants
- Unified Post-Acute Care Prospective Payment System (proposed last year)
- Align Medicare Bad Debt with private pay practices (new)
- Include new "high-value innovative technologies" through bundled payment demonstrations (new)

Administrative proposals of note:

- Continue and expand the new State Medicaid Performance Scorecard
- Discussion of last year's array of Medicare and Medicaid Program Integrity provisions

The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) summary is available [here](#). To view the President's complete budget proposal, click [here](#); and to view the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services budget proposal, click [here](#).

SUBMIT COMMENTS: CMS RELEASES PROPOSED PASRR RULE

On Feb. 20, 2020, CMS published a [proposed rule](#) on modernizing the requirements for Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR), currently referred to in regulations as Preadmission Screening and Annual Resident Review (PASARR). All residents in Medicaid-certified nursing facilities must be screened for mental illness and intellectual disability and, if necessary, be provided specialized services while in the facility. According to CMS, the proposed rule incorporates statutory changes, reflecting updates to diagnostic criteria for mental illness and intellectual disability, reducing duplicative requirements and other administrative burdens on State PASRR programs while making the process more streamlined and person-centered.

A preliminary summary by AHCA of the provisions in the proposed rule, as well as specific questions posed by CMS for public comment, can be viewed [here](#).

Both AHCA and Nebraska Health Care Association (NHCA) are reviewing the proposed rule in detail and plan to submit comments on the proposed changes. If you have suggestions on the proposed rule, you are invited to share them with NHCA at nhca@nehca.org and AHCA at regulatory@ahca.org by **March 12**.

NHCA encourages members to review the proposed rule and submit their own comments directly to CMS as well. Comments are due to CMS no later than **4:00 p.m. CT on April 20, 2020**, and must be submitted in one of the following three ways with the reference code CMS-2418-P:

1. **Electronically:** You may submit electronic comments on this regulation to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the "Submit a comment" instructions.
2. **Regular mail:** Written comments may be mailed to ONLY the following address:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Attention: CMS-2418-P
P.O. Box 8016
Baltimore, MD 21244-8016

Note: Please allow sufficient time for mailed comments to be received before the close of the comment period.

- 3. Express or overnight mail:** Written comments may be sent by express or overnight mail to ONLY the following address:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Attention: CMS-2418-P
Mail Stop C4-26-05
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

MEDICARE PART B THERAPY PROCEDURE PAYMENT RATES FOR 2020

On Nov. 15, 2019, CMS published the calendar year (CY) 2020 physician fee schedule payment Final Rule that updated the payment rates for individual billing procedure codes used to report outpatient therapy services. In addition, the Final Rule also finalized coding requirements for the reporting of therapy services furnished in whole or in part by a therapy or therapist assistant. In late January, CMS updated the files which changed the fee schedule rates in many geographic locations due to legislation enacted in late December 2019. AHCA has updated the [CY 2020 Rate File](#) (.zip file available for download) and the [Medicare Part B Therapy Procedure Payment Fact Sheet](#). Log into your AHCA/NCAL account to view the documents.

CMS RESCINDS TROUBLESOME NCCI MEDICARE PART B THERAPY CLAIM EDITS

Following an advocacy effort by AHCA/NCAL and other organizations, CMS rescinded eighteen problematic National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI) Edits retroactive to Jan. 1, 2020, that would have prohibited payments for Medicare Part B Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy evaluations on the same day that Therapeutic Procedures or Group Therapy common procedural terminology billing codes were billed on a claim.

On Jan. 24, the CMS NCCI edit development contractor sent [this letter](#) to AHCA describing the policy reversal, and [this follow-up letter](#) on Feb. 5 that includes additional details about what to do if providers submitted claims prior to this reversal that were denied due to the edits. The current accurate NCCI edit tables effective Jan. 1, 2020, are available [here](#).

CONGRESS SUBMITS LETTER TO CMS REGARDING POTENTIAL CUTS TO MEDICARE PART B PAYMENTS IN CY 2021

On Feb. 5, in response to concerns raised by AHCA/NCAL and other impacted provider groups, a bipartisan group of ninety-nine members of the U.S. House of Representatives submitted a [letter](#) to CMS regarding the estimated payment reductions to non-physician providers in CY 2021 to offset increased physician evaluation and management code payments. The estimated cut for Part B therapy services was listed by CMS as eight percent in the 2020 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule final rule published on Nov. 15, 2019. In the letter, Congress asked CMS to explain the methodology used to estimate the payment cuts and to describe what additional information that CMS plans to take into consideration before implementing such changes in the CY 2021 payment rule.

PROVIDER COALITION LETTER SUBMITTED TO CMS REGARDING POTENTIAL CUTS TO MEDICARE PART B PAYMENTS IN CY 2021

On Feb. 10, a coalition of thirteen provider organizations, including AHCA, submitted a comment [letter](#) to CMS regarding the estimated payment reductions to 37 different provider specialties, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology services in CY 2021 to offset increased physician evaluation and management code payments as described above. The letter details specific recommendations for CMS to consider in order to minimize or defer any rate reductions as they develop the CY 2021 physician fee schedule proposed rule to be issued this summer.

The provider coalition recommendations fall under these three major headings:

1. Review impact of budget neutrality and the conversion factor adjustment on specialty providers
2. Defer or cancel implementation of add-on code GPC1X until new policy is authorized by Congress to cover new (currently unreimbursed) services under the Medicare program
3. Phase-in payment decreases to minimize the immediate impact on affected providers

INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS ON MEDICARE FEE-FOR-SERVICE TOPICS

The CMS Center for Program Integrity (CPI) Provider Compliance Group will host a virtual series of interactive presentations on Medicare Fee-for-Service compliance topics, as well as an open mic question session, **Friday, April 3, 2020, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. CT**. The event is open to all Medicare Fee-for-Service providers and suppliers. Registration for the event is coming soon. Updates will be posted on the [CPI webpage](#) as they become available.

EMERGENCY GENERATOR BATTERY TESTING

Life Safety Codes for emergency generator testing apply to any health care occupancy having an emergency generator. There are generally two types of batteries used to supply power to an emergency generator: vented or maintenance-free. Both types of batteries are acceptable to use with an emergency generator, but the testing of each is different.

Previous editions of fire codes only allowed the use of vented batteries. For old style batteries, vented or flooded, the liquid electrolyte inside the battery can be accessed to conduct a specific gravity test. Monthly gravity tests are still required for this type of battery, and there is no change in the code regarding these tests. In 2016, Nebraska started using the 2010 edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 110 standard, which makes an allowance for maintenance-free batteries and the testing of them. For detailed Life Safety Code information on maintenance-free batteries from the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Doug Hohbein, click [here](#).

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

NATIONAL SKILLED NURSING CARE WEEK GUIDE AVAILABLE

AHCA/NCAL recently released the 2020 National Skilled Nursing Care Week (NSNCW) [Planning Guide and Product Catalog](#). Browse through this guide for activity ideas and explore the specially selected products to help you celebrate NSNCW, May 10-16, 2020. This year's theme, *Sharing Our Wisdom*, focuses on listening, engaging, and sharing stories and experiences. Learn more [here](#).

WATER MANAGEMENT TRAINING AVAILABLE

Skilled nursing and assisted living facilities provide care for vulnerable people who can become critically ill when steps are not taken to reduce the risk of water-borne diseases such as Legionnaire's. Effective water management programs are mandated for nursing facilities by CMS and highly recommended for assisted living facilities by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a best practice.

AHCA/NCAL offers an affordable online [Water Management Training](#) course that provides long-term care staff with information about:

- What a water management plan is
- The essential elements of an effective water management program
- How nursing and assisted living facilities should develop and maintain comprehensive water management programs

The online one-hour training contains five modules and is designed for administrators, building engineers and maintenance department personnel, DONs who have not been trained as Infection Preventionists, and other staff responsible for building operations or infection prevention and control.

The per-individual cost for the training is \$25 for member facility staff and \$65 for non-members. An online final test and certificate of completion are included with each registration.

Make sure your facility is ready to address the threat of water-borne pathogens and external water interruptions by having a thorough and effective water management plan in place. Register for AHCA/NCAL's [Water Management Training](#) today.

Nebraska Now is distributed regularly to all NNFA/NALA members for which we have email addresses.

Nebraska Nursing Facility Association and Nebraska Assisted Living Association are affiliates of Nebraska Health Care Association, American Health Care Association, and National Center for Assisted Living.

Contact NNFA/NALA at 402-435-3551 or nhca@nehca.org if you have questions, are unable to open the links, or have misplaced your password.

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