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March 30, 2017

UPCOMING EDUCATION

- [Webinar: Staffing: Analyzing Five-Star Data and Applying QAPI Principles to Improve Staffing Ratings/Retention](#) – 4/12/2017
- [NNFA/NALA Spring Convention, Kearney](#) – beginning 4/24/2017
- [The Nuts and Bolts of the New CMS Requirements of Participation, Lincoln](#) – 5/10/2017
- [Webinar: Questions about Medical Cannabinoids in a State Where They Are Illegal](#) – 5/11/2017
- [Assisted Living Administrator Training, Lincoln](#) – beginning 5/16/2017
- [Assisted Living Administrator Refresher, Lincoln](#) – beginning 5/16/2017
- [Executive Nurse Leadership Training, Lincoln](#) – beginning 5/23/2017
- [Nurse Leadership Training, Lincoln](#) – beginning 5/23/2017
- [Webinar: Pain: Analyzing Five-Star Pain Quality Measures and Applying QAPI Principles to Improve Pain Quality Measure](#) – 5/23/2017

QUICK LINKS

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



MARCH FEATURED PRODUCT

[Advance Directives Booklets](#)

Member Price: \$24.95 (pkg of 25)

(Updated to include language assistance taglines and notice of nondiscrimination)

WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON FOR YOU

- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- NEBRASKA FEDERATION OF BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS
- STATE CHAMBER POLICY COMMITTEE
- NEHII PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
- FUTURE OF ASSISTED LIVING STEERING COMMITTEE
- AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION REGIONAL MULTI-FACILITY COUNCIL
- NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING CUSTOMER RELATIONS COMMITTEE
- E-HEALTH COUNCIL
- NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING HCBS WORK GROUP
- NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BREAKING NEWS

CMS CORRECTS PART B THERAPY FEE SCHEDULE PRICING ERROR – PROVIDER ACTION NEEDED

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently [announced](#) there were errors in their Part B Physician Fee Schedule pricing files for seven of the eight new codes for physical therapy and occupational therapy evaluations that were introduced on Jan. 1, 2017. These errors have resulted in underpayments for certain codes from January through March 2017. The CMS pricing file will be corrected on April 1, 2017, and applied retroactively.

Because CMS has instructed that corrections to past payments be corrected only upon request, providers' therapy and billing staff should review these procedure price corrections to evaluate the scope and amount of underpayments. Medicare Administrative Contractors will not automatically correct claims already processed prior to April 1, rather, only those erroneously paid claims that providers bring to their attention.

Due to these changes, AHCA has posted an updated CY 2017 [therapy pricing file](#). [Read More](#)

NNFA/NALA

NNFA/NALA SPRING CONVENTION – ONLINE REGISTRATION OPEN

Registration is open for the 2017 Nebraska Nursing Facility Association and Nebraska Assisted Living Association Spring Convention, **April 24-27** at Younes Conference Center in Kearney, Nebraska. [Register online](#) and save \$5 per person per day on convention registration fees. Full details and the convention flyer are available [here](#). Don't wait – the early registration rate ends **April 7!**

Members must log in to NHCA's website to register for the convention online and receive member pricing. For assistance logging in or to request a member account, contact nhca@nehca.org or 402-435-3551.

Room blocks have been reserved at the Comfort Inn, Fairfield Inn & Suites, La Quinta, Hampton Inn, and Holiday Inn. Make reservations by **April 3** to guarantee the NHCA room rates.

LAST CHANCE TO DONATE ITEMS FOR GIFTS ACROSS NEBRASKA SILENT AUCTION!

The [Gifts Across Nebraska benefit silent auction](#) will be held April 25-26 during the 2017 NNFA/NALA Spring Convention in Kearney. Attendees will have the opportunity to bid on a variety of fun items and packages while supporting the [Nebraska Health Care Foundation](#). All funds raised are used to provide [scholarships](#) to Nebraskans seeking education in long-term care.

Donations of single items and packages are needed to make the event a success. **Before April 7**, indicate your commitment to donating an item or package by submitting the [donation form](#). The value of items donated may be tax deductible.

RECENTLY ISSUED SPECIAL BULLETINS

[NNFA 2017-10 and NALA 2017-5 – Repeal and Replace Goes to House Rules Committee for Mark-Up](#)

On March 20, amendments were released for debate in the House Rules Committee hearing on the "American Health Care Act," the bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. The proposed amendments are divided into two sets; one set is technical or clarifying in nature, and the other would make substantive policy changes to the bill introduced on March 6. Assuming passage by the House Rules Committee, the bill, H.R. 1628, could then move to the House floor for a final vote possibly as early as Thursday, March 23.

[NNFA 2017-11 – Training and Testing Requirements of Emergency Preparedness Final Rule](#)

On March 24, 2017, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released S&C 17-21-All and S&C 17-22-All to assist providers and suppliers in meeting the training and testing requirements of the new Emergency Preparedness Final Rule that was published on Sept. 16, 2016, and became effective on Nov. 15, 2016. The final rule has an implementation date of **Nov. 15, 2017**, one year following the effective date. Providers are expected to meet the requirements of the training and testing program by the implementation date, otherwise they may be cited for non-compliance.

MEMBER IN THE NEWS

CHI JOINS BLUE CROSS MEDICARE NETWORK

The Omaha World-Herald reported Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) facilities and doctors "will join the health care network for people covered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska's Medicare Advantage plans." This is Blue Cross Blue Shield's first year offering Medicare Advantage plans and the inclusion of CHI expands the network meaning more "options for clients of Blue Cross' Medicare Advantage plans." [Read More](#)

NEBRASKA GOVERNOR RICKETTS VISITS CENTENARIANS AT THE EVERGREEN

Nebraska's Irish Capital, O'Neill, is home to The Evergreen Assisted Living Residence, which has a unique claim. The facility is home to five residents over the age of 100, which they say is more than any other assisted living facility in the state. The claim was enough to draw Governor Pete Ricketts to the senior care community on Saturday, March 18, after walking in O'Neill's St. Patrick's parade.

[Read More](#)

REGULATIONS & REIMBURSEMENT

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT WITHDRAWN

On March 23, 2017, the Leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives announced the "American Health Care Act," the bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, would be withdrawn.

President Trump has indicated he will now move his focus to other issues - such as tax reform. [Read more](#)

ACA MANDATES REMAIN IN EFFECT

With the decision last Friday to withdraw the "American Health Care Act" from consideration in the U.S. House of Representatives, efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act are on hold for now. This means that the individual and employer mandates under the ACA remain in effect. [Read more](#)

AL BRIEF ON MEDICAID CUTS NOW AVAILABLE

The National Center for Assisted Living has developed an assisted living-specific [brief](#) to support advocacy efforts regarding potential changes to Medicaid financing in the American Health Care Act.

TOMORROW IS EMPLOYER DEADLINE FOR ELECTRONIC FILING

The Internal Revenue Service has set the deadlines for mandatory forms required by the Affordable Care Act that must be completed by [an applicable large employer](#) – employers with 50 or more full-time employees, including full-time equivalents. For calendar year 2016, Forms [1094-C](#) and [1095-C](#) are required to be filed with the IRS by Feb. 28, 2017, or March 31, 2017, (if filing electronically.) [Read more](#)

CONGRESS NULIFIES NEW RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS FOR RECORDABLE INJURY AND ILLNESS

Congress nullified OSHA's rule finalized in December 2016 "Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain Accurate Records of Each Recordable Injury and Illness," informally referred to as the "Volks" rule. The Volks rule made recordkeeping requirements a continuing obligation and effectively gave OSHA the ability to issue citations to employers for failing to record work-related injuries and illnesses during the 5-year retention period, contrary to the six-month statute of limitations. President Trump has indicated he will sign the resolution. When President Trump signs the

resolution, recordkeeping requirements will return to those before the new rule. At that point, <https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html> will be updated to reflect the ongoing requirements without the Volks rule.

GOVERNOR RELEASES UPDATE

Governor Ricketts has released his [Mid-Session Update](#), stating his top priority remains balancing the budget without raising taxes.

NEBRASKA MEDICAID HOSTING MANAGED CARE CALLS FOR PROVIDERS

April 4-20, 2017, Nebraska Medicaid will host another series of managed care [plan-specific calls](#) for providers with concerns involving Wellcare of Nebraska, Nebraska Total Care, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan. Nebraska Medicaid invites participants to submit questions by email 48 hours in advance of the calls so they can be researched and an answer provided during the call. Questions on Heritage Health, Nebraska's Medicaid managed care program, can be submitted at any time to dhhs.heritagehealth@nebraska.gov.

HHS DELAYS NEW MANDATORY BUNDLES

The Department of Health and Human Services issued an [interim final rule](#) delaying the effective date of the final rule, "Advancing Care Coordination through Episode Payment Models (EPMs); Cardiac Rehabilitation Incentive Payment Model; and Changes to the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Model." [Read more](#)

DHHS LONG TERM CARE BED UTILIZATION AND OCCUPANCY REPORT 2017 DUE DATES

It is approaching the time to submit your first quarterly [Long Term Care Bed Utilization and Occupancy Report](#) for 2017 to DHHS.

- First quarter data submission date is **April 21, 2017**.
- Second quarter data submission date is **July 21, 2017**.
- Third quarter data submission date is **Oct. 20, 2017**.
- Fourth quarter data submission date is **Jan. 19, 2018**.

As a reminder, **DHHS no longer has a fax number**. Reports must be **emailed as Word documents (.doc)** to Carla Becker, DHHS Nebraska Office of Health Statistics, at Carla.Becker@nebraska.gov. For questions, contact Carla Becker via email or by phone at 402-471-3575.

CMS REMINDS NURSING FACILITIES HOW TO PREVENT PHYSICIAN CERTIFICATION DENIALS

A Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services MLN Connects March 16, 2017, e-newsletter provided reminders and educational resources to help SNF providers avoid SNF PPS denials due insufficient physician certification documentation. SNF billing and compliance personnel are encouraged to review the information. [Read more](#)

RESEARCH & DATA

NEBRASKA ANTIPSYCHOTIC USAGE TABLE UPDATED

The [Nebraska Antipsychotic Usage Table](#) has been updated on the Nebraska Health Care Association website. The table was updated as of March 3, 2017, and includes information through third quarter 2016. (Click [here](#) to view the previous four quarters only.) A missing value for the quality measure indicates that the facility either did not have enough residents to be included in the denominator (equal to 30 residents for the long-stay measure and 20 residents for the short-stay), or the score was missing for that facility.

The national average decreased to 16.1 percent, Nebraska had a slight decrease from 18.5 percent last quarter to 18.3 percent. Of note, this data posted to the Nursing Home Compare website has changed from posting a three-quarter average to a four-quarter average.

MEMBERS ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN TELEMENTAL SURVEY

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services asked NHCA to share a survey request with members. The University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health is conducting a study regarding Nebraska Telemental Health Utilization and Training Needs Assessment. UNMC is seeking participation from all active Nebraska Medicaid providers. The goals of this study include: investigating the variations in the use of telemedicine by behavioral health providers, primary care providers, and by the six behavioral regions in Nebraska; identifying barriers and promoters of telemental health; and identifying the training and continuing education needs for telemental health to prepare for optimal integrated care. Please consider participating in this [survey](#). The survey takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and, upon completion, you will receive an email notification confirming that your responses have been submitted.

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

CMS HOLDS SNF VALUE-BASED PURCHASING CALL, SLIDES AND RECORDING AVAILABLE

On March 15, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services held a national provider call to review the Skilled Nursing Facility Value-Based Purchasing (SNF VBP) program. The SNF VBP program, which will begin in fiscal year 2019 (i.e., Oct. 1, 2018), rewards skilled nursing facilities with incentive payments for their performance on the Skilled Nursing Facility 30-Day All-Cause Readmission Measure (SNFRM). The way this program works is that, based on a SNF's re-hospitalization rate in CY 2017 or improvement from CY 2015 to CY 2017, a SNF's Medicare Payment rates may be cut up to 2 percent for the entire year starting on Oct. 1, 2018. The baseline period for the SNFRM is CY 2015. The SNF VBP scoring methodology uses both an achievement and an improvement score, defined by CMS. Providers can learn more by accessing the slides from the March 15 call and listening to the recording, which will be available approximately two weeks after the event. Details can be found [here](#).

WPS TRAINING FOR SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES

WPS Government Health Administrators serves as the Medicare Administrative Contractor for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. WPS has scheduled multiple educational events in Omaha, Lincoln and Grand Island for skilled nursing facilities. Topics include claims, consolidated billing, denials, and documentation requirements. Visit the [WPS Learning Center](#) for information and to register, or [click here](#) for a listing of Nebraska-specific events.

AHRQ TOOLKIT DESIGNED TO REDUCE URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS IN LONG-TERM CARE

A new evidence-based toolkit from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) can help long-term care facilities reduce catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTIs). The toolkit is based on the experiences of more than 450 long-term care facilities across the country that participated in an AHRQ-funded project and successfully reduced CAUTI. The [new toolkit](#) uses strategies from AHRQ's Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program (CUSP), which has reduced CAUTI as well as central line-associated bloodstream infections in hospitals. [Read more](#)

NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

This year's National Nursing Home Week® theme is all about your center's spirit and sense of community for residents, volunteers, and staff alike. Acts of kindness generosity and compassions from proud veterans, immigrants, and hardworking people of different faiths fill every center.

Get all the t-shirts, posters, buttons, lapel pins, star-shaped stress relievers and balloons to help you celebrate this exciting week. Use the balloons and posters to decorate your halls and t-shirts, buttons and pins as giveaways and prizes for your games or events. Place your product orders early, these special items will sell out. Don't miss the opportunity to celebrate! Order products [online](#) or by phone at 800-321-0343. For planning resources and other information, check out the official [website](#).

LONG LIST OF ISSUE BRIEFS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE

AHCA/NCAL'S website houses a long list of issue briefs and information on a range of topics, such as SNF Value Based Purchasing, Bad Debt, SNF Margins, Managed Care, Arbitration, and Caregiver Shortages. [Read more](#)

NEW AND REVISED MEDICARE LEARNING NETWORK PUBLICATIONS AND MULTIMEDIA

Several new and revised publications and multimedia resources are available from the Medicare Learning Network:

- [NPI: What You Need to Know Booklet — New](#)
- [SNF Consolidated Billing Web-Based Training Course — Revised](#)
- [Remittance Advice Resources and FAQs Fact Sheet — Revised](#)
- [Reading a Professional Remittance Advice Booklet— Revised](#)
- [Medicare Enrollment for Institutional Providers Booklet — Reminder](#)
- [Safeguard Your Identity and Privacy Using PECOS Booklet — Reminder](#)

AHCA/NCAL

WEBINAR: SO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT WANT TO RUN FOR THE AHCA OR NCAL BOARD

American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living members in good standing may submit an application for the 2017-18 elections for the AHCA Board of Governors and the NCAL Board of Directors. This webinar will explain the application, credentialing, and campaign process. It is perfect for those interested in running this year or in future years.

[So You Think You Might Want to Run for the AHCA or NCAL Board: Everything You Want to Know but Are Afraid to Ask](#)

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

1:00-2:00 p.m. CDT

AHCA/NCAL ADVOCATES TAKE THE HILL FOR MEDICAID, SURVEY ISSUES

More than 100 AHCA/NCAL Members were in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, March 22 to advocate for preservation of Medicaid funds and survey reform. As Congress moves forward on health care reform efforts, the fly-in comes at a critical time. [Read More](#)

LATEST ISSUE OF NFP NEWS AVAILABLE

The latest version of AHCA/NCAL's NFP News, a monthly newsletter for not-for-profit providers, is [now available](#).

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

The Nebraska Nursing Facility Association and Nebraska Assisted Living Association are affiliates of the 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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