On January 14, one hundred and twenty legislators were sworn into the 216th Session of the New Jersey Legislature. The following week, Chris Christie took his second oath for the office of Governor. In the days between, with the new Legislature in session, the Governor had two options with bills remaining on his desk from the previous session. He could sign them into law or do nothing and let them simply expire, otherwise known as a pocket veto.

Signed into law were two bills tracked by HCANJ. One, Assembly Bill 3427, provides for temporary professional or occupational licensure for qualified nonresident military spouses. The other, Assembly Bill 3558, provides for the licensure of pediatric respite care facilities. The latter includes language that recognizes licensed pediatric long-term care facilities as pediatric respite care facilities and says that they are not required to be licensed under the provisions of this bill.

Not signed—or pocket vetoed—by the Governor, was Assembly Bill 2172, which would have required nursing homes, along with hospitals and home health care agencies, to offer, and health care workers to receive, annual influenza vaccinations. Although non-compliance would not constitute a licensure violation or deficiency under the terms of the legislation, facilities would have been required to report immunization percentage rates to the Department of Health with aggregate data being made available to the public. This legislation has been reintroduced this session as Assembly Bill 1936 and Senate Bill 1176.

Another bill that met with a pocket veto is Senate Bill 1598. Supported by HCANJ, this legislation would have permitted attending advanced practice nurses (APNs) to determine the cause of death and execute death certification of a patient if the nurse is the patient’s primary caregiver. As one of the sponsors, Assemblywoman Nancy Muñoz, said in a press release, “Allowing an attending APN to make the determination and execute the death certificate in a timely manner will help the grief-stricken family.” She added, “This measure is an effort to streamline the process to make a very difficult situation less stressful.” It could prove helpful to families if a loved one dies in a facility and a physician is not available and there is an APN present who is well aware of the health conditions that led to a resident’s death. This legislation is back for the new session as Assembly Bill 1319 and Senate Bill 1152.

The Governor also took no action on Senate Bill 2241, which prohibits Medicaid managed care organizations from reducing certain provider reimbursement rates without approval from DHS. The bill has not been reintroduced to date for the current legislative session.

All legislation that almost made it to the Governor’s desk, but fell short before the last session ended, must now start anew. They include legislation to
Clinical Corner

Do higher nurse satisfaction rates equal fewer survey deficiencies?

Based on a comparison of the overall satisfaction reported by nurses in the My Innerview Skilled Nursing Employee Satisfaction Surveys during 2012, and the number of survey deficiencies reported during 2012 as published on Nursing Home Compare in August 2013, the answer is yes. It appears that a more satisfied team of nurses leads to greater attention to detail and fewer deficiencies.

Current healthcare practice demands that nurses are empowered to develop skills and increase competence so that they are equipped to deliver care to a frailer and sicker geriatric population. Learning is life-long.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center’s (ANCC) Pathway to Excellence Practice lists the processes that lead to the successful recruitment of top candidates, and staff retention through high job satisfaction. It also provides a framework for enhancing patient care and safety.

**The Pathway to Excellence Practice Standards**

- Nurses control the practice of nursing
- The work environment is safe and healthy
- Systems are in place to address patient care and practice concerns
- Orientation prepares nurses for the work environment
- The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) or Director of Nursing (DON) is qualified and participates at all levels of the organization
- Professional development is provided and used
- Equitable compensation is provided
- Nurses are recognized for achievements
- A balanced lifestyle is encouraged
- Collaborative relationships are valued and supported
- Nurse Managers are competent and accountable
- A quality program and evidenced-based practices are used

Do a survey of your facility regarding the processes listed. How many of them are in place? How many are not? Better yet, ask your nurses.

In addition three more quality measures should be in place:

- Addressing important policies and protocols that are specific to long term care settings, such as zero tolerance of resident abuse and neglect, the use of restraints, and fall prevention
- Incorporating Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) as part of the nursing community
- Recognizing a person-centered model of care

The ROI of educating and training your staff, competent hiring practices and enhancing staff satisfaction and retention pays dividends in many ways, the most important of which is quality of resident care and resident satisfaction.
Upcoming Recognition Dates

FEBRUARY
- American Heart Month
- AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- National Senior Independence Month
- Women’s Heart Health Day (National Wear Red Day)
- Pride in Food Service Week
- National Cardiovascular Professionals Week
- Alzheimer’s & Dementia Staff Education Week

MARCH
- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- National Social Work Month
- National Women’s History Month
- Brain Injury Awareness Month
- Natl. Developmental Disabilities Awareness Mo.
- Save Your Vision Month
- National Sleep Awareness Week
- National Patient Safety Awareness Week
- Long Term Care Administrators Week
- National Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week
- World Oral Health Day
- American Diabetes Alert Day
- National Doctor’s Day

Is there a hero residing in your building?

Each and every resident for whom you care is a special individual, but among those special residents there are those whom you might consider to be LEGENDS. Perhaps they appeared in movies, won a Pulitzer Prize, or founded an organization that became a mainstay in our society.

It is these people – those who went above and beyond – who are legends. Whether it was a great feat or a humble act, these legends inspired others to meet the challenges that life presented them.

HCA NJ introduced our “Who’s Who in New Jersey Long Term Care Facilities” to honor the legends who call our facilities home. It is time, once again, to put out the call to our members to identify those residents in their buildings whom they believe should be recognized as “Heroes Among Us” for outstanding contributions to society.

Each honoree will be profiled in issues of Health Care Update throughout the coming year. Unlike previous years, we will not be choosing legends to profile from your nominations – we will profile each resident who is nominated. This will no longer be a competition, but rather an opportunity to learn about the residents you feel are legends.

We hope that you will share the stories of your resident legends with us.

For details and nomination forms. Please visit: http://www.hcanj.org/wp-content/themes/hcanj/emails/whoswho.pdf

The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2014.

GET A HEAD START ON YOUR PLANNING

National Nursing Home Week ~ May 11 - 17
Celebrate a Hawaiian Theme

Further information will follow and can also be found at: http://www.ahcancal.org/events/national_nursing_home_week/Pages/default.aspx
establish an unused prescription drug repository, which HCANJ has strongly promoted. It would provide a way to get unused prescriptions—otherwise disposed of in the trash by health care facilities—into the hands of poor and uninsured persons who need but cannot afford them. This bill has been reintroduced this session as Assembly Bill 1940.

Also back is an HCANJ-supported proposal that would require nursing and assisted living facilities, along with certain other health care facilities, to either be generator-ready or equipped with an on-site back-up power generator within three years. Because of zoning, permitting and inspection hurdles, three years is a reasonable time-frame by which facilities would have to come into compliance. The bill also makes low-interest New Jersey Economic Development Authority loans available for equipment and installation. The new bill is Assembly Bill 1341 and Senate Bill 854.

Both houses have issued their schedule of activity between now and the end of March. On the calendar this month...Governor Christie is slated to present his FY 2015 State Budget proposal to the Legislature on February 25.

Scholarship Programs to change

For some time now, HCANJ has offered nursing scholarships for HCANJ member facility staff who are studying in LPN or RN programs. For the past several years, a scholarship has also been offered for a member staff individual to attend the HCANJ 100-Hour LNHA preparation class. During that time, the scholarships have also transitioned over to the HCANJ Foundation.

The Foundation, wanting to expand the reach of its scholarship funding, has decided to change the program offerings to encompass more education opportunities.

This newly-redesigned program will offer the following annual scholarships:

- 2 – $2,000 scholarships for member facility staff studying for LPN (renewable for a second year)
- 2 – $2,000 scholarships for member facility staff studying for RN (renewable for a second year)
- 1 – $1,000 scholarship for member facility staff to attend HCANJ 100-Hour LNHA Prep program
- 1 – $1,000 scholarship for member facility staff to attend a CALA certification program of choice
- 1 – Up to $1,000 scholarship for member facility staff to study and test for ANCC Gero Nurse Certification

Scholarship applications for all awards will be distributed at the same time. Facilities should look for these applications to be available by the beginning of March each year.

Any questions can be directed to Pattie Tucker at pattie@hcanj.org.