

Advanced Standing Program Unveiled

At a time when government resources are limited, a collaboration between the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the Health Care Association of New Jersey (HCANJ) Foundation may be just what the doctor ordered.

Assisted Living residences in New Jersey—which meet the highest quality standards of care now—have an opportunity to receive the designation of “Advanced Standing.” The voluntary Advanced Standing program – the first of its kind in the country – came from within the assisted living profession, a quality initiative and drive to move beyond the minimum standards required of assisted living providers throughout the state.



DHSS Commission Mary E. O'Dowd

The program was unveiled on Friday, February 10 at an event attended by NJDHSS Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd and James McCracken, M.H.A., New Jersey Ombudsman for the Institutionalized Elderly, as well as representatives of national assisted living

organizations, consumer groups and the HCANJ Foundation. The event took place at Brandywine Senior Living at Princeton at 155 Raymond Road in Princeton, NJ.

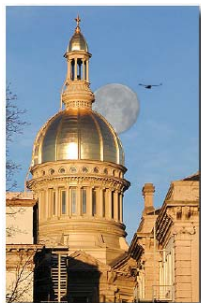
“This program (also) represents a change in culture for state government — more often we are in the position of ensuring minimum standards, which are enforced with penalties and fines. But in this case, we are asking providers to go beyond the minimum — to strive for excellence and be awarded with a special designation.”

NJDHSS Commission Mary E. O'Dowd

To receive the distinction of Advanced Standing, a residence must comply with all local, state and federal regulations governing assisted living, as well as attaining quality benchmarks as established by a Peer Review Panel.

“This new pilot program is another step forward in ensuring our residents receive quality care,” said Commissioner O’Dowd. “The Advanced Standing program will expand oversight of assisted living facilities and for the first time collect quality data on these facilities.”

“This partnership will provide more information to consumers about the quality of assisted living providers to empower them in making decisions,” added the



News from the State House

Proposed FY 2013 State budget shortchanges nursing facility Medicaid beneficiaries

After years of State budget cuts to various aspects of nursing facility Medicaid reimbursement, no inflation adjustments, flat rates, and a more than \$70 million reduction for reimbursement in the current budget, New Jersey nursing facilities are at a breaking point. In 2011, New Jersey had the third highest reimbursement shortfall of all states, with facilities losing a projected \$34 a day on average for each Medicaid beneficiary. Factor in the \$70 million funding cut for FY 2012 and the shortfall now approaches \$50 a day.

The \$31.2 billion spending plan that Governor Christie has proposed for FY 2013 does little to improve the picture. It includes an increase of only

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Camera-ready advertising is accepted for Health Care Update. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month prior to publication. Rates: Full Page \$500, Half Page (horizontal or vertical) \$300, Quarter Page \$175.

As a Membership service, classified advertisements of 75 words or less for positions wanted or available can be placed without charge by HCANJ members for two consecutive months.

For further information contact Pattie Tucker by phone at 609-890-8700 or via e-mail at pattie@hcanj.org.

Through the Volunteer of the Year, DDD Hero of the Year, and NFP Services of the Year awards programs, the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living honor those individuals who are dedicated to improving the quality of lives of residents and their surrounding communities.

Eligibility details, selection criteria, and submission requirements are detailed in the following nomination packets for each program:

Developmental Disabilities

Hero of the Year:

<http://www.hcanj.org/emails/2012DDHeroNomination.pdf>

Not-for-Profit Services of the Year:

<http://www.hcanj.org/emails/2012NFPNomination.pdf>

As always, the New Jersey nominees for the AHCA/NCAL Volunteer of the Year awards will be the winners of last year's HCANJ Volunteer of the Year awards.

The deadline for AHCA receipt of all nominations is Monday, May 21, 2012. Nominations will be coded and sent to a judging panel of long term care community members.

Honorees will be recognized at AHCA/NCAL's 63rd Annual Convention and Expo, October 7-10, 2012, in Tampa, Florida.

If you have any questions or comments, please email or call Claire Navaro at cnavaro@ahca.org or 202-898-6317.

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Commissioner. "This program also represents a change in culture for state government—more often we are in the position of ensuring minimum standards, which are enforced with penalties and fines. But in this case, we are asking providers to go beyond the minimum—to strive for excellence and be awarded with a special designation."

Continued focus on the quality care of assisted living residents was the driving force behind the program. Originally licensed in December 1993, New Jersey assisted living providers have proven that quality care can be delivered in an environment that also places significant value on the quality of life for residents.

The regulations that govern assisted living in NJ remain a model for other states looking to create or revamp their own assisted living rules. However, New Jersey's providers do

more than
j u s t
c o m p l y
with those
rules; they
focus on
quality,
t h e
attribute
a r o u n d
which the
Advanced
Standing
program was based.



NJ Ombudsman for the Institutionalized Elderly, James McCracken

“Assisted Living providers in New Jersey have long subscribed to the concept of quality care in a setting that provides the highest possible quality of life,” said Paul R. Langevin, Jr., President of HCANJ. “The Advanced Standing program will give them an opportunity to prove the standards of excellence they have set for themselves.”

Staff retained by the HCANJ Foundation will conduct compliance

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Upcoming Recognition Dates

MARCH

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

National Social Work Month

National Women's History Month

5 - 11

National Sleep Awareness Week

4 - 10

Patient Safety Awareness Week

19 - 23

Long Term Care Administrators Week

27

American Diabetes Alert Day

30

National Doctor's Day



APRIL

National Parkinson's Awareness Month

National Occupational Therapy Month

9 - 13

National Patient Advocacy Week

15 - 21

National Volunteer Week

22 - 28

Administrative Professionals Week

16 - 22

National Minority Cancer Awareness Week

20 - 26

March of Dimes WalkAmerica

7

World Health Day

16

National Healthcare Decisions Day

22

Earth Day

26

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

MARK

YOUR

CALENDAR!

HCANJ's 40th Annual State
20-Hour Symposium
& Mini Expo

March 20 - 22, 2012

Trump Plaza

Atlantic City, New Jersey

Registration information is available online at:
<http://www.hcanj.org/education.asp>

For further information, please call Carol Rogers -
(609) 890-8700.

The theme for this year's National Nursing Home Week (NNHW) is "Celebrating the Journey." NNHW will be observed in nursing facilities throughout America starting on Mother's Day, May 13 and continuing through May 19, 2012.

National sponsor, the American Health Care Association (AHCA) will develop a NNHW planning guide and themed promotional products. Updates on the availability of materials will be posted to www.nnhw.org. You can also follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nursinghomeweek. The official email address is nnhw@ahca.org.

NATIONAL NURSING HOME
WEEK 2012


Celebrating
the Journey

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visits which will ensure regulations are being met at those residences that choose to apply to the Advanced Standing program. Additionally, those residences must submit measurable quality data to be compared against standards established by the National Center for Assisted Living in Washington, DC. Only once a residence is found to have satisfactorily met government regulatory requirements, as well as the quality measures benchmarks, will the DHSS deem the residences as having attained Advanced Standing status.

“New Jersey is taking a truly innovative, ‘first of its kind’ approach to ensuring that its seniors residing in assisted living communities receive quality care and services,” said David Kylo, Executive Director of the National Center for Assisted Living.

“New Jersey has been viewed as an innovative pioneer on the assisted living quality front for many years. This new

Advance Standing program adds to that legacy of innovative solutions for advancing quality,” Kylo said.

The DHSS will conduct random follow-up surveys of those providers participating in the program and will continue to survey any providers against whom a complaint has been lodged. At any time, should a residence fall below DHSS licensing standards, such as unsatisfactory performance revealed during a complaint investigation, that provider can be removed from the Advanced Standing program and would be subject to the DHSS licensing and survey process.

“Advanced Standing status will tell consumers that they are communicating with an assisted living residence that has attained the highest standards of care and quality,” concluded Langevin. “This is one more tool they can use when seeking a residence for those about whom they care the most.”



(l. to r.) Consumer advocate Jackie Pinkowitz, National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) Executive Director, David Kylo, NJDHSS Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd, Brandywine Senior Living CEO Brenda Bacon, NJ Ombudsman for the Institutionalized Elderly James McCracken & HCANJ President Paul R. Langevin

State House Update

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\$10 million for nursing facility reimbursement—a mere \$5 million State funding and \$5 million in federal matching funds. Although better than flat funding, a half-percent increase for nursing facility reimbursement is not good news for the approximately 28,000 frail elderly Medicaid beneficiaries who rely upon these facilities not only for their health care, but also as their home.

Nursing facilities receive an average of \$8.31 an hour to take care of these individuals who, in all likelihood, could not be taken care of anywhere else but a hospital. That \$8.31 must cover the cost of 24-hour a day nursing care, three meals a day, dietary supplements, grooming, personal hygiene care and more. All of this for less than \$200 a day. In a hospital it would cost \$3,000 to \$4,000 a day.

The ability to offset Medicaid losses with more generous Medicare reimbursement is swiftly fading. Through its October 2011 update, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) cut New Jersey nursing facility Medicare reimbursement by \$207 million annually. This February Congress voted to reduce the federal reimbursement of bad debt to New Jersey skilled nursing facilities over the next three years to help sustain physician Medicare

reimbursement and to extend the payroll tax cut. President Obama approved this action. These cuts come on top of \$2 billion in Medicare nursing home reimbursement being diverted away from New Jersey nursing facilities over a ten year period to pay for federal health care reform. One cannot help but wonder, why is it always nursing facilities and the individuals who rely upon them for care that get shortchanged?

To inadequately reimburse nursing facilities for the Medicaid care that they provide jeopardizes both the quality of care and access to care for those New Jerseyans who are among this State's poorest, sickest and frailest—many of them members of the Greatest Generation that helped make this country what it is today.

The ball is now in the Legislature's court. HCANJ will be pressing hard for an increase in the appropriation for nursing facility Medicaid reimbursement. Restoring only \$10 million of last year's \$70 million cut shortchanges those who are among the most vulnerable in this State—the poor, frail and elderly Medicaid beneficiaries who depend upon nursing facilities to provide them with quality health care.