



Provider Perspective

long term care news

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2009 WVHCA
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VISIT TO CAPITOL HILL

Representatives from WVHCA were on Capitol Hill in early June to meet with our congressional delegation and put a local face on national long term care issues. As part of the annual AHCA/NCAL Congressional Briefing, the Association paid visits to Senator Byrd and Rockefeller's offices, as well as those of Congressmen Mollohan and Rahall, and Congresswoman Capito.



Using WVHCA's "triangle of quality care" as the centerpiece of the presentations, WVHCA President Scott Fox, AMFM Owner John Elliot, WVHCA CEO Jesse Samples, and Director of Government Relations John Mullins described how the three sides of the triangle – workforce, finance and regulation - would be impacted by current issues in Washington, DC. These issues included the following:



Stability in Medicare Funding. CMS has proposed slashing Medicare payments for skilled nursing care by \$1.05 billion in FY 2010 – estimated to be \$18 billion over 10 years. Nationally, facilities are operating with a 2% profit margin. Even with an average occupancy higher than the national rate, in West Virginia, Medicare has still been propping up a below-cost Medicaid income to facilities and keeping them above the red line. Barely. With the statewide average profit margin only slightly above 4% (after Federal Income Taxes), any cuts to Medicare would have a catastrophic impact on long term care as a business and risk further loss of crucial care and services for the frail and elderly population.

Health Care Reform. So far, the national debate on health care reform has revolved around universal coverage, prevention and acute care services. Long term care needs to be a part of the reform discussions to ensure continued services and adequate funding. To this point, the only rumors in Washington are of a switching of funding agency and the potential for Medicare post-acute bundling of payments. Both of these rumors are troublesome and need a forum for discussion. WVHCA also made inquiries on the status of the Congressional Long Term Care Caucus and suggested a pro-active role for the Caucus as a "steering committee" for long term care reform discussions. Congresswoman Capito is the current co-chair of the caucus.

The DC visit also included a Legislative Reception including members of Congress, key staff and attendees from across the nation in which John Elliot received the Joe Warner Patient Advocacy Award from AHCA/NCAL that was presented to him by Congresswoman Capito. In her remarks, Congresswoman Capito said that John was a compassionate businessman, provides a valuable service to the elderly and, as a person, "John always takes the high road." Congratulations to Mr. Elliot!

A Message from

Jesse Samples
WVHCA Chief Executive Officer



Big Cuts on the Table for Medicare Payments to Nursing Homes

A previous rule from the Bush Administration has become part of the FY2010 budget proposal of the Obama Administration. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has re-instated the proposed Medicare cuts to the Resource Utilization Group (RUG) payments. The RUG-IV system has been proposed to be part of the Prospective Payment System (PPS) for skilled nursing facilities in the new administration's proposed budget. CMS has concluded that the proposed rule is refinement of the system adopted in 2006 and that these changes are required in order for rates to more accurately reflect resources utilized in providing services. In reality, CMS has saved significantly as a result of paying skilled nursing facilities for providing rehabilitation services as opposed to a more expensive acute care setting.

The end result is more than \$1 billion in direct cuts to skilled nursing facilities for fiscal year 2010 will occur. The impact to West Virginia facilities is a reduction of Medicare RUG payments totaling more than \$6 million. While this impact could be reduced, assuming an increase to the market basket index occurs, the proposed cuts may significantly jeopardize certain facilities' ability to sustain an adequate caregiver job base. The loss of caregivers will limit access to skilled nursing facility services for West Virginia seniors.

The only salvation for West Virginia is that our State's Medicaid program is still operating in the black and no significant cuts are currently being proposed. Many states are facing cuts from Medicare in addition to cuts already imposed by state Medicaid programs.

Health Care Reform Debate Intensifies

Look for the Obama administration and leading Democrats to have their health care reform proposal rolled out by the end of July. Democrats contend that health care reform is about individuals having choice and they emphasized that they are not proposing a big government managed health plan. Meanwhile, Republicans are on the offensive and are criticizing Obama's plan as another government takeover and that such a plan is not affordable.

On the long term care front, AHCA has presented their plan to reform long term care on numerous venues in Washington. Their message has consistently been that long term care has to be part of any discussions involving health care reform at the national level. AHCA is hoping that the newly created Health Care Reform Office will be responsive to pursuing long term care reform initiatives. For more information about long term care reform initiatives, please visit the AHCA website at www.ahcancal.org.

Favorite Quotes

As my friend and colleague Dick Herrick from New York always says, "As a famous person once said: It's never over until it's over. And in our particular case, it never seems to be over."

Here's What West Virginia's Long Term Care Customers Say

A Powerful Testimony to the Care and Service Delivered Each Day by West Virginia Nursing Facilities

The majority of WVHCA members participate in resident and family satisfaction surveys administered through My InnerView (MIV). My InnerView is a web-based, applied research and quality management firm endorsed by the WVHCA. Participating facilities provide MIV with the number of surveys required and sealed packets containing the survey are delivered to the residents or family members. A stamped envelope is provided to allow responses to be mailed to MIV directly. The survey process is designed to communicate and ensure that the responses are voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

In 2008, West Virginia nursing facilities scored above the national average in both overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend their facility to others. Ninety percent (90%) of West Virginia facility residents rated their nursing home as "excellent" or "good" in comparison to the national average of eight-seven (87%).

Nationally, eighty-five percent (85%) of families gave their facility a rating of "excellent" or "good" for both overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend the facility to others. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of WV families rated their nursing home as "excellent" or "good" for both overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend the facility to others.

Providers recognize the value of anonymous surveys and encourage participation. This is evident by the increased number of responses received by MIV annually. In fact, WV response rates for 2008 exceeded the average response rates overall for My InnerView.

The information provided by My InnerView allows facilities the opportunity to improve upon services. Identification of priorities may be made through recognition of a response rate that is less than desired, comments provided or trending. Of note, 2008 results indicate that some of the primary strengths found in the participating facilities were competency, respectfulness and care or concern of the staff. That in itself is something for West Virginia to be proud of!

Innovatix Care Solutions:

Managing Diabetes for Residents

By: James Chau, Communications Manager, Innovatix

In 2008, Innovatix and its team of clinical professionals introduced the Innovatix Care Solutions program, a first-ever, industry wide initiative to establish outcomes measures and guidelines for diabetes management. "The Innovatix Care Solutions program provides a systematic, population-based approach for identifying persons at risk, intervening with specific programs of care, and measuring the clinical and economic outcomes. This program uses scientific evidence/protocols as a baseline for care, and involves a great clinical support team that constantly manage and update information." said Jeanne Manzi, RPh, CGP, Director, Clinical Pharmacy Services, Innovatix.

Currently, the Innovatix Care Solutions program offers diabetes management services for more than 34 of its members. The experience of the program varies in application across health care delivery sites and providers in the nation.

Lawrence Millman, Pharmacy Director of Avalon Gardens Rehab & Health, which is located in Smithtown, NY, said that "The Innovatix Care Solutions program has been a valuable asset personally; being that he's more than 15 years removed from pharmacy school, it allows the pharmacists, directors, and consultants to be up-to-date with new medications and tools. There are over 353 beds in the facility, and more than half of all the patients are diabetic, which translates to very high insulin expenses. Through the diabetes manual, the pharmacy has more control over their formularies and dispensing. They can monitor and reduce the amount of finger sticks, schedule nursing staff coverage, and prevent serious treatment complications."

ValueCare Pharmacy, located in Brecksville, OH, is a long term care pharmacy currently serving 22 nursing facilities and caring for approximately 3,400 patients. Gay Gafringer, Vice President, Clinical Consulting at ValueCare Pharmacy said that "The Innovatix Care Solutions program provides her consultants with the most current information on diabetes management, from disease monitoring and treatment to medication use, including the appropriate administration times and lab work. By focusing on disease identification, treatment, and appropriate drug therapy, our patient outcomes were improved. This ensures that they are providing the highest level of safety and efficacy."

"Helping our members manage growing health care expenditures without sacrificing quality of care is among Innovatix top priorities," said John P. Sganga, President & CEO of Innovatix. "Aside from the value of our clinical information and education, Innovatix provides members with access to the most competitive and comprehensive portfolio of medications and/or insulin for diabetes and blood glucose management.

Innovatix is pleased to offer West Virginia Healthcare Association (WVHCA) members our Blood Glucose Meters, Reagents, Consumables & Service contract with Roche Diagnostics. Through this contract, Innovatix members have experienced significant savings on blood glucose meters, lancet devices, test strips, diabetes management software and more. To find out more about the Innovatix Care Solutions program or how our services can enhance your business model, please contact an Innovatix Customer Care Representative (toll-free) at 888.258.3273 www.innovatix.com.

John Elliot Receives National Award

John Elliot, President of AMFM Nursing & Rehabilitation Centers received the Joe Warner Patient Advocacy Award on June 3rd from the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living. Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito presented the award to Mr. Elliot on June 3rd at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The award is presented to association members who have worked to educate Members of Congress about the needs of long term care patients and to advance the quality of long term care. The award, named for the late Joe Warner, recognizes advocates who possess the same compassion for, and commitment to, the nation's

senior and long term care population. Warner was the former president and CEO of Illinois-based Heritage Enterprises. Congratulations John Elliot. We appreciate your work and dedication to the long term care profession.



John Elliot and Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito

What's Happening Throughout WV



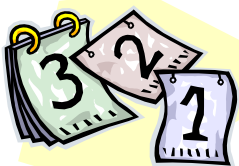
Braxton Health Care and Rehabilitation Center celebrated their 25th anniversary during an Open House in May. American Legion Post #33 presented the facility with the American flag during a flag raising ceremony. Tribute was paid to all Veterans.

SweetBriar assisted living community has opened an Alzheimer's Unit with 12 units. Stop by for a tour of their new unit known as SweetMemories.

The Madison Park assisted living community in Huntington unveiled renovations during a ribbon-cutting ceremony and Open House in May. Congratulations!

Long Term Care Leadership Conference

Make your reservations now for the Long Term Care Leadership Conference at Lakeview Resort in Morgantown. \$39 golf available on September 21-24, committee meetings and educational sessions on September 23-24. NHA CEUs available: 7 Fabulous entertainment by Sandy Sowell Entertainment! Reservations: 1-800-624-8300



Celebrate professional weeks of recognition that are applicable to your facility and honor those who work, live, or volunteer in long term care facilities. For a list of events, visit: www.ahcancal.org and select 2009 Health Care Events Calendar under Quick Links.

2009 WVHCA Education and Events Calendar

***July 8 - WVHCA Management Training Part 3**, Princeton Health Care Center, Princeton

***July 21-23 - AANAC 2009 3-Day Certification Workshop** Robin Hillier, CPA, STNA, LNHA, RAC-CT, President of RLH Consulting, Westerville, OH, Sutton/Flatwoods Days Hotel and Conference Center, Sutton, WV

***July 30 - Wound Care Seminar** – Jackie Todd, RN, CWCN, DAPWCA, Medline Industries, Inc. (in cooperation with WVMi and American Medical Technologies) Sutton/Flatwoods Days Hotel, Sutton

August 27-28 Long Term Care Social Work Conference Sutton/Flatwoods Days Hotel, Sutton

***September 23-24 Long Term Care Leadership Conference**, Lakeview Resort, Morgantown (golf available September 22)

September WVHCA Management Training Part 1, Facility to be announced.

October 4-7 American Health Care Association/ National Center for Assisted Living Convention, McCormick Place, Chicago, Illinois

October 20-21 Assisted Living Conference Holiday Inn Express Civic Center, Charleston

***October 27-30 Activity Professionals 90 Hour Training Course**, Holiday Inn Express Civic Center, Charleston

October WVHCA Management Training Part 2, Facility to be announced.

***November 5-6 and 11-13 Activity Professionals 90 Hour Training Course**, continued. Holiday Inn Express Civic Center

November 12 Financial Seminar, Embassy Suites Hotel, Charleston

November 17-18 Infection Control Basic and Intermediate Seminar – Deatra Adkins, RN, Director of Clinical Services, WVHCA

November WVHCA Management Training Part 3, Facility to be announced.

***December 16-18 Activity Professionals 90 Hour Training Course**, continued. Holiday Inn Express Civic Center, Charleston

***Brochure available on the website:**
www.wvhca.org



Serra Family Foundation Donates First Annual Named Scholarship to WV Health Care Foundation

West Virginia Health Care Foundation was incorporated in 1998 to award scholarship opportunities to WVHCA member

employees to assist them with the expense of furthering their education. The initial program was named for the WVHCA member who held the first nursing home administrator's license in West Virginia, the late Herman Conaway.

This year, Lou Serra who owns and operates a continuous care retirement community located in Weirton, donated the first named scholarship on behalf of the Serra Family Foundation in the amount of \$2,250. Lou has worked in the long term care profession since the 60's and he is taking every opportunity to give back to his community, employees, and the long term care profession.

Louis Francis Serra was born and raised in Weirton, West Virginia. His father, Joseph Serra, was a bricklayer and contractor, and his mother, Lettie Ferrare Serra, was a homemaker. Lou graduated from Weirton High School in 1945 and then served in the U.S. Army for more than a year. Lou has three children: Rhonda, Lucinda, and Joseph. After applying his talents as a newscaster and commercial manager at Tri State Broadcasting, an Administrative Aide for Congressman Cleve Bailey, and a professional in the Communication Department at the College of Steubenville, Lou discovered the long term care profession that he would come to know and love.

In 1967, Lou recognized a need in the community for long term care of the elderly. In September 1968, Lou received a loan from HUD for \$1,000,000.00 and he began construction in April 1969 on the first Serra family nursing facility. In May 1970, Weirton Convalescent Center opened with 104 beds and Lou was the licensed Administrator. Daughters Rhonda and Cindy (Lucinda) worked in the facility as youngsters (10-11 years old) passing water to the residents while wearing special aide uniforms. The family grew up around the facility and they each now play an important role in long term care. Rhonda is a Registered Nurse and currently serves as the Administrator at the facility. Cindy Alongi, who is one year younger than Rhonda, works at the Serra Manor office. Lou's son, Joseph, taught school for more than 15 years and now works at the facility in various activities. Rhonda's husband, Geno, is the Supervisor of the maintenance team and their daughter, Gina, also works during the summer months as a Certified Nursing Assistant.

Lou has delegated most of the long term care community responsibilities to his family and skilled staff, except for his time spent assisting the church groups and United Way. Lou has served in many volunteer positions over the years,

including President of Weirtonian Lodge ISDA, President of the American College of Health Care Administrators, and as a West Virginia Health Care Association board member. Governors Caperton and Underwood awarded Lou with the Distinguished West Virginian Award.

In 1984, Lou created a charitable foundation, Serra Family Foundation, to assist organizations that deal with the poor and disadvantaged. In addition, he provides more than \$12,000.00 per year in scholarships to area schools and also makes scholarships available to employees who wish to further their education. The family's focus still remains on groups such as Salvation Army, Catholic Community Services, Bread Basket, United Way and numerous other groups dealing with the needy. The Foundation donates approximately \$50,000.00 - \$60,000.00 annually to various organizations and individuals. The Serra Family Foundation is structured to continue to give back to the community and individuals indefinitely. Lou Serra said, "We fund many scholarships to several disadvantaged students and staff members. It's a small step to support the West Virginia Health Care Foundation by providing the \$2,250 named scholarship on behalf of the Serra Family Foundation. We are pleased to be able to assist one student who wishes to grow individually and professionally. This is one way that we can make a difference in someone else's life through the Foundation."

The continuum of care campus is continuously growing and today the campus offers a 137-bed skilled nursing facility (Weirton Geriatric Center); 32 assisted living units (Serra Manor); 20 unit independent living facility (Grandview Terrace); licensed Alzheimer's Unit; and a home health care division (Weirton Health Care) which provides waiver services in West Virginia and Ohio. Plans are in order to open a new 14 unit assisted living community in 2009 that will have aides trained in the "resident-centered care" method.

Thank you Lou Serra for your contributions to long term care!



Scott Fox, WVHCA President; Janet Marie Bryant, Scholarship Recipient; Lou Serra; and Jesse Samples, WVHCA Chief Executive Officer at the 2009 WVHCA Awards Banquet in Charleston.