More than 560 members, associate members, vendors and their guests joined NYSHFA/NYSCAL at the Turning Stone Resort in Verona, NY, June 25 – 28 for the 68th Annual Convention & Expo. The theme of this year’s convention was “Excellence Through Quality…Putting the Pieces Together.”

NYSHFA/NYSCAL offered education sessions for both skilled nursing and assisted living providers that featured speakers with a national, state and industry perspective. Topics included Communication Throughout your Organization, Recruitment and Retention of Staff, Changing Regulations, Finance and Managed Care. The Opening Keynote Speaker was Ms. Lee Woodruff, a New York Times best-selling author who garnered critical acclaim for her compelling story about her family’s journey to recovery following her husband Bob’s roadside bomb injury in Iraq. Mark Parkinson, CEO of AHCA/NCAL provided members with the national update. The Closing Presentation was given by Jim Bryan, who led an interactive discussion about Becoming a Professional Humanitarian.

Members had ample opportunity to network with industry colleagues, including at the Expo, where nearly 100 vendors exhibited, and at the Awards Banquet, where the NYSHFA/NYSCAL Lifetime Achievement Award was presented posthumously to Edward J. Stafford, former Executive Director of NYSHFA. Volunteer and Employee Recognition Awards were also presented. Following the banquet, attendees gathered in the Hospitality Room and enjoyed our Dueling Piano entertainment. (See inside this issue for more Convention highlights.)

Most importantly, we would like to congratulate NYSHFA’s and NYSCAL’s Officers who were sworn in for 2017-2018.

**The NYSHFA Officers are:**
- Michael McPartlon, Chair
  Kingsway Community
  Schenectady, NY
- Shannon Cayea, Vice Chair
  Elderwood at Wheatfield
  Buffalo, NY
- Vincent Maniscalco, Secretary/Treasurer
  Sky View Rehab & Health Care
  Croton on Hudson, NY
- Douglas Wissmann, Immediate Past Chair
  Hillside Manor Rehabilitation & Extended Care
  Jamaica Estates, NY

**The NYSCAL Officers are:**
- Brenda Scovello Seeber, Chair
  Kingsway Manor Assisted Living
  Schenectady, NY
- Sander Lustig, Vice Chair
  Lakeside Manor Home for Adults
  Staten Island, NY
- Esther Zeidman, Secretary
  Mermaid Manor
  Brooklyn, NY
- Tammy Marshall, Treasurer
  Maple Pointe at Rockville Centre
  Assisted Living
  Rockville Centre, NY
- Bob Chur, Immediate Past Chair
  CCNY, Clarence, NY
A Message from the President
STEPHEN B. HANSE, ESQ., PRESIDENT AND CEO
shanse@nyshfa.org

Not long ago, I was having a heart to heart conversation with my second son Christopher. He was entering his second year at SUNY Geneseo as a Business Administration major, but he was not happy. As we talked, it became clear that he wanted to change his major to Political Science, but was concerned that I would somehow be disappointed. Chris has always loved government, policy and politics and had been working in the State Senate. Political Science was a natural fit! He realized that he should pursue learning about government and politics because that was what he loved to do.

It’s been said that if you love what you do you’ll never work a day in your life. Loving what you do in an environment of teamwork, execution and accountability ultimately leads to success. These principals are the foundation of my vision at NYSHFA/NYSACA – a vision to ensure that we (1) protect and advance our members’ interests; (2) proactively prepare our members to meet the demands of the future; and (3) ensure NYSHFA/NYSACA’s place as a preeminent leader in healthcare.

With this vision in mind, it was a privilege to work together with our Executive Committee and Conference & Education Committee to take a fresh look at our Annual Convention and create a high value, enjoyable experience for our members. Early on, the Conference & Education Committee established a theme for the 2017 Convention – “Excellence Through Quality...Putting the Pieces Together.” The “pieces of the puzzle” provided by the speakers and presenters at our Conference addressed numerous state and federal financial and regulatory issues, the Requirements of Participation, hospital readmissions, data stewardship, employee engagement and retention, and managed long term care issues, to name a few.

Additionally, through the generosity of the American College of Healthcare Administrators, NYSHFA/NYSACA was able to secure New York Times best-selling author Lee Woodruff as the Convention’s Opening Keynote Speaker. Lee’s remarks concerning her family’s healthcare journey and the essential role of caregivers in the healthcare continuum set the tone for an inspiring and substantive Convention.

Towards the conclusion of her remarks, Lee noted that in her experience, skilled nursing and assisted living employees and volunteers truly love what they do and serve as a reminder to our residents and their families of the compassion, hope and resilience that resides in the human spirit. These remarks echoed in my mind as we honored the career of Ed Stafford and the dedication and selflessness of the men, women and children volunteers recognized during our Awards Banquet Dinner.

Throughout the Convention, one thing was clear to me – though we face numerous challenges every day (many of which were addressed at our Convention and are raised in this newsletter) - our members truly have a passion for the care they provide throughout New York. Whether it was during the education seminars, at the Expo, or even at the Turquoise Tiger Hospitality Room, it was plain to see that NYSHFA/NYSACA members are highly motivated, focused individuals who value one another and truly love what they do.

Thank you for the privilege to serve you.
**September 6**

**Conducting Facility Assessment and the Linking to Your Staff’s Competencies & QAPI (Key Programs of the CMS’ Requirements of Participation)**

LaGuardia Marriott, East Elmhurst, NY

The facility assessment is a component of CMS RoP and Phase 2 that will be implemented beginning November 28, 2017. If utilized properly, the facility assessment can become a key to strategic planning and improving your facility’s position in the marketplace. This seminar, presented by Amy Lee, President of Coretactics, is approved for 6.0 clock hours for Licensed Nursing Home Administrators & Assisted Living Administrators. The target audience is LNHA, DON’s & Other SNF Leaders. To register, visit www.nyshfa.org and click on Education.

**September 10 – 16**

**National Assisted Living Week**

Sponsored by the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL), National Assisted Living Week commemorates the staff and customers of our Nation’s assisted living residences. This year’s theme is “Family is Forever.” Maya Angelou describes this theme as “family isn’t always blood, it’s the people in your life who want you in theirs; the ones who accept you for who you are, the ones who would do anything to see you smile and who love you no matter what.” More information may be found on the NCAL website, www.ncal.org.

**September 12**

**Audio Conference**

**Emerging Hot Issues in Managed Care and Withdrawal of Equity**

10am - 12pm

Withdrawal of Equity - The Department of Health has announced it intends to step up enforcement of the law and regulations concerning the withdrawal of nursing home operators’ equity from skilled nursing facilities under certain circumstances. This session, presented by attorney Neil Murray of O’Connell & Aronowitz, should be of great interest to owners, chief financial officers, and administrators as it will address those questions and provide guidance on how to navigate the complex regulatory landscape. Part II - This session will provide the audience with the most up to date information on major policy developments (managed care, DSRIP, VBP, reforms to assisted living) that are impacting long term care organizations. To register, visit www.nyshfa.org and click on Education.

**September 18**

**36th Annual Foundation for Quality Care Health Care Open Golf Tournament**

Van Patten Golf Club, Clifton Park, NY

Proceeds to benefit the Ruth E. Stafford and James D. Durante Nursing Scholarships and other Foundation programs. For more details and to register, go to http://www.nyshfa.org/.

**September 27**

**2nd Annual Emergency Preparedness Conference**

Albany Marriott, Albany, NY

NYSISH/NSCAL invite you to participate in our 2nd Annual Emergency Preparedness Conference. “Embracing Adversity & Emerging Stronger,” Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at the Albany Marriott on Wolf Road, Albany, NY. Please click here to view the registration brochure. To register, visit www.nyscal.org.

**October 25**

**Audio Conference**

**The Changing Landscape of Labor and Employment Law**

10am - 12pm

This year has seen an unprecedented amount of uncertainty in the area of labor and employment law. This program will examine a number of these changes at the federal, state and local level, which are requiring facilities to re-think employee leave benefits, worker classifications, policy development and enforcement, as well as labor relations and union contract objectives. To register, visit www.nyshfa.org and click on Education.
**NYSFA / NYSCAL Congratulates New York’s Bronze and Silver National Quality Award Winners**

The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) have announced the recipients of the 2017 Bronze – Commitment to Quality and Silver – Achievement in Quality Awards. This year, 520 skilled nursing care centers and assisted living communities in 46 states achieved the Bronze Award, and 191 skilled nursing care centers and assisted living communities in 43 states earned the Silver Award. Six NYSFA/NYSCAL members received the Bronze award and seven members received the Silver award.

The AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program recognizes providers across the nation that have demonstrated their commitment to improving quality of care for residents and patients in long term and post-acute care centers and communities.

“Quality award recipients advance our mission of improving lives by delivering solutions for quality care,” said Mark Parkinson, President and CEO of AHCA/NCAL. “We applaud their efforts to enrich the lives of those in the long term and post-acute care communities we serve.”

Implemented by AHCA/NCAL in 1996, the National Quality Award Program is centered on the core values and criteria of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, which is also the foundation of the metric-based AHCA/NCAL Quality Initiative. The Baldrige program helps organizations in different business sectors improve and achieve performance excellence. The award program has three levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Providers begin the quality improvement process at the Bronze level, where they develop an organizational profile with fundamental performance elements such as vision and mission statements and key strengths and challenges. Bronze applicants must also demonstrate their ability to implement a performance improvement system. Trained Examiners review each application to determine if the center has met the demands of the criteria. Recipients may now move forward in developing approaches and achieving performance levels that meet the criteria required for the Silver - Achievement in Quality Award.

“We congratulate this year’s award recipients and look forward to offering continued support and guidance on their journey to improve quality care,” said AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Board of Overseers Chair Alana Wolfe. “The dedication and focus on quality that each organization has shown garners recognition. It will serve their patients and residents well.”

The National Quality Award Program is sponsored by AHCA/NCAL Associate Business Members: First Quality, National Research Corporation, and Team TSI Corporation. The awards will be presented during AHCA/NCAL’s 68th Annual Convention and Exposition in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 15-18, 2017.

**New York Bronze Award Recipients**
- Dominican Village, Amityville, NY
- Sunrise of Fleetwood, Mount Vernon, NY
- Tarrytown Hall Care Center, Tarrytown, NY
- The Emerald Peek Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, Peekskill, NY
- Wingate at Beacon, Beacon, NY
- Wingate at Dutchess, Fishkill, NY

**New York Silver Award Recipients**
- Alpine Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, Little Falls, NY
- Carillon Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Huntington, NY
- Elderwood at Waverly, Waverly, NY
- Kingsway Manor Assisted Living, Schenectady, NY
- Middletown Park Rehabilitation & HCC, Middletown, NY
- Somers Manor Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, Somers, NY
- Sunrise of Holbrook, Holbrook, NY

**Congratulations to all our Members!!!**

**NYSFA / NYSCAL to Offer Quality Award Workshops This Fall**

These workshops, designed for skilled nursing and assisted living providers, will assist participants as they prepare to apply for the Bronze and Silver Level AHCA / NCAL National Quality Awards. The Workshops will be held October 25, 2017 (Silver Level) and October 26, 2017 (Bronze Level), both at Noble Health in Syracuse. Another Silver Level Workshop will be held on November 1, 2017 at Wingate At Dutchess in Fishkill, NY. More details and information to follow.
Clinical and Quality Committee Appoints Co-Chairs

NYSHFA/NYSCAL is pleased to announce the appointment of Kelly Anderson and Nancy Babis as Co-Chairs of the Clinical and Quality Committee. Kelly Anderson, LNHA, has a background in respiratory therapy and quality and is employed by Centers Health Care in Corning. Nancy Babis, RN, is the DON at Briody Health Care Facility. Nancy has been a member of our Clinical and Quality Committee for 13 years, as well as an adjunct instructor for our First Line Manager course. Kelly and Nancy will co-share their duties as Chairs and look forward to working collaboratively with the Committee.

At the July Clinical and Quality meeting the Committee updated the existing workplan for 2017-2018. The workplan includes Data Management, Quality Initiatives, AHCA Quality Awards, Recognition Program and Resident and Family Education. Goals were added to each section of the workplan and will be reviewed at each meeting for updates.

NYSHFA/NYSCAL is excited to announce the Infection Preventionist Course and the Wound Certification Course are now being offered. The Infection Preventionist Course will be offered through American Health Care Association and will help facilities prepare for meeting the RoP Phase 3 requirements. The Wound Care Certification Course will be offered through the Wound Care Education Institute. Both programs will be made available to NYSHFA/NYSCAL members at a discounted rate.

NYSHFA staff have continued to implement our Requirements of Participation (ROP) workplan to help members with the CMS’ new requirements based on the ROP’s 3 Phases. Our goal is to provide or link you to educational opportunities on specific topics, share new resources, and consolidate information in one place on our website for easy access. The workplan has been updated as we head into the ROP Phase II and have set up links to the upcoming education on Facility Assessments, QAPI Plans, and the NYSHFA/NYSCAL Emergency Preparedness Conference. Visit our website at www.NYSHFA.org and click on the Be Aware: CMS Requirements of Participation ICON on the front page. NYSHFA is currently in discussions with DOH to provide regional meetings this fall on the Life Safety requirements and online webinars on the new Survey Process. NYSHFA will announce these once they are confirmed.

For more information about Clinical, Quality and Operational Services, contact: Nancy Leveille at nleveille@nyshfa.org or Lisa Volk at lvolk@nyshfa.org.
2017 Convention Award Winners Honored

At NYSHFA/NYSCAL’s 68th Annual Convention & Expo, a total of eight recipients of our Employee Recognition and Volunteer of the Year Awards Programs were honored at the Awards Banquet. We would like to thank Kate Costello, Administrator of Hudson Valley Rehab. & Extended Care Center for presenting the awards.

NYSHFA Employee Recognition Program

The Clinical and Quality Services Committee is pleased to announce the recipients of this year’s Employee Recognition Awards. The goal of the Employee Recognition Program is to honor exemplary employees working in skilled nursing facilities.

RN of the Year
Shirley Gill
The Pines at Poughkeepsie Center
Poughkeepsie, NY

Shirley Gill, evening supervisor, has been employed at The Pines at Poughkeepsie Center for seven years. She has an extensive nursing background beginning in her home country of Barbados and extending to the United States. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology and Psychology. She worked at the Heart Foundation in Barbados for 10 years as Director of Cardiac Disease Prevention and at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for 20 years in various nursing positions. Shirley and her husband immigrated to the United States 10 years ago and in 2015 became US citizens. Shirley is a dedicated, caring nurse who ensures her residents receive the highest level of care possible.

LPN of the Year
Carol Melander
Saratoga Nursing Center
Ballston Spa, NY

Carol Melander, LPN began working at Saratoga Center Rehab & Skilled Nursing Care in 2015. She worked as a medication nurse and then as a charge nurse. In 2016 she was promoted to Unit Manager of the facility’s 40 bed dementia unit. Carol is a single mother of three who chose to become an LPN after her children had grown up. She graduated at the top of her class and has spent her nursing career in long term care. Carol embodies the meaning of caregiver. She is caring, compassionate and has reinvented the way her facility cares for residents with Dementia and Alzheimer’s.

CNA of the Year
Mary Escamilla
Bridgewater Center For Rehab and Nursing
Binghamton, NY

Mary Escamilla has been employed as a certified nursing assistant at Bridgewater Center for Rehab and Nursing for over 26 years. She started her career in the facility’s long term care unit and currently works in the rehabilitation unit due to her outgoing personality and ability to motivate residents towards discharge home. Mary has received several employee excellence awards and in 2016 was named Bridgewater Center’s Employee of the Year. Prior to coming to Bridgewater Center, she served in the United States Air Force. Mary’s compassion, consistency and devotion to the residents she cares for is extraordinary.
Heart and Hands Award

Melanie Wisniewski
ElderWood at Wheatfield
Niagara Falls, NY

Melanie Wisniewski has worked at ElderWood at Wheatfield for 20 years. She started her career working with dementia residents as a certified nursing assistant. Melanie transitioned to the activity program when the facility opened their Seasons Program for dementia residents. Her role has evolved into the position of Senior Seasons Aide. Melanie has also received ElderWood at Wheatfield’s Employee of the Month Award. Melanie is a great role model to her co-workers and new staff learning about the Seasons Program. She is constantly trialing fresh ideas to develop innovative programs for her residents.

Volunteers of the Year

NYSHFA/NYSICAL is pleased to announce the recipients of the Volunteer of the Year Awards. The Volunteer of the Year Program recognizes outstanding volunteers serving in skilled nursing facilities.

Adult Volunteer

Carlos Berroa
The Pines at Poughkeepsie Center
Poughkeepsie, NY

Carlos, a retired corrections officer, has volunteered at The Pines at Poughkeepsie Center for the past year, and has spent more than 400 hours at the facility. Carlos has become a vital member of the recreation department. He is the facility’s grill master, dealer for the roulette table, and is happy to be the muscle when setting up for activities. Residents and staff alike have come to know him well and he is an expected and anticipated presence at many weekly events. Carlos’ hard work and dedication to the residents is outstanding.

Senior Adult Volunteer

Richard Packer
Hornell Gardens
Hornell, NY

Richard Packer started volunteering at Hornell Gardens five years ago after being discharged from the facility. Since then, his volunteer service has evolved into a seven day a week commitment! An avid gardener, Richard maintains the facility’s gardens and brings in fresh flowers from his own garden to brighten the residents’ day. He helps with group activities and outings; delivers mail; and reads letters for residents who no longer can. Richard brings a caring attitude and personal attention to each resident he comes in contact with.

Group Volunteers

Linda Reich and the 3rd Grade CET Elementary School Students
Sky View Rehabilitation & Health Care
Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Linda Reich started volunteering at Sky View Rehabilitation & Health Care 29 years ago when she created an intergenerational program with the facility. Every year, from January through June, she brings her third grade elementary students to the facility on a weekly basis. The students visit with the residents, perform songs, play games, and participate in arts and crafts. This volunteer makes a difference by bringing together the younger and golden generations, helping them learn from each other, and strengthening community bonds.

Spiritual Guidance Volunteers

International Mission for the Disabled
Union Plaza Nursing Home Inc.
Flushing, NY

The members of International Mission for the Disabled have volunteered at Union Plaza Care Center for 21 years. They visit the facility twice a week and provide bilingual religious services for the residents. Other activities include arts and crafts, discussion groups, movies, cultural performances and interesting guest speakers. It is rare to come across a group of volunteers who truly make a difference and are so eager to extend themselves for the benefit of others, and at the same time have such diversified talents and capabilities. Rev. Michael Pak and Ms. Sun Sook Park accepted the award on the group’s behalf.
NYSHFA/NYSCAL Presents Lifetime Achievement Award

The NYSHFA/NYSCAL Lifetime Achievement Award was presented posthumously to Edward J. Stafford, former Executive Director of NYSHFA. Mrs. Ronnie Stafford accepted the award on his behalf. The ceremony, held on June 27th during the Awards Banquet at the Annual Convention, was attended by many of Ed’s friends and colleagues. We would like to thank Mr. Jim Durante for presenting the award.

Ed Stafford served with dedication as Executive Director of NYSHFA from 1986 to 2002. Prior to that time, he had served as President of NYSHFA’s Board of Directors from 1971 to 1973, and in 1976 he joined the NYSHFA staff as Director of Governmental Relations. Ed was actively involved in the skilled nursing facility profession for 42 years. His career began when he started working for his family facility, the Stafford Nursing Home in Syracuse in 1960. In recognition of his parent’s dedication to the profession, he established the Ruth E. Stafford Scholarship Program in memory of his mother.

During his distinguished career, Ed held the positions of Executive Board Member of the American Health Care Association, Chairman of the AHCA Life Safety Committee, Member of the National Fire Protection Association Institutional Occupancy Committee, New York State delegate to the White House Conference on Aging, and was a founder and the first President of the New York State Chapter of the American College of Nursing Home Administrators. He was also Vice President of AHCA Region II, and was a member of the Empire State Society of Association Executives. Upon his retirement in 2002, Ed received numerous accolades in recognition of his many achievements. These included the NYSHFA Outstanding Service Award, the “Pillars of Our Industry” designation by the New York State Chapter of the American College of Health Care Administrators, and the “2002 Distinguished Member of the Year” award from the Empire State Society of Association Executives.

Throughout his career, Ed was a tireless advocate for the elderly and the professionals who cared for them. He was a respected voice in the halls of the Legislature, both in Washington and in Albany.
Shown left to right is NYSHFA’s newly elected Executive Committee (front row): Michael McPartlon, Shannon Cayea, and Doug Wissmann. (back row): Vincent Maniscalco with Stephen Hanse, President & CEO.

Pictured left to right: Stephen Hanse administers the oath of office to NYSCAL Officers Brenda Scovello Seeber, Tammy Marshall and Esther Zeidman.

NYSHFA/NYSCAL representatives welcome Lee Woodruff, Opening Keynote Speaker. Shown from left to right are Douglas Wissmann, Stephen Hanse, Lee Woodruff, Shannon Cayea, Michael McPartlon, and Greg Chambery.

Mark Parkinson, CEO of AHCA/NCAL, brought members up to date on key national issues.

Val Deetz of the NYS Department of Health provided a regulatory update regarding changes to adult care/assisted living professionals which affect service delivery. She is joined by Shelley Wagar, NYSCAL Executive Director.
Leah Klusch of The Alliance Training Center (center) presented a session on Data Stewardship: Essential Skills for Long Term Care Facility Managers. She is pictured with Lisa Volk, Director of Clinical and Quality Services (left) and Nancy Leveille, FQC Executive Director (right).

Dr. Pat Bomba of Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (center) spoke about the Digital Transformation of MOLST. She is shown with co-presenters Carolyn Kazdan (left) and Katie Orem (right).

Stephen Hanse (left) thanks Convention Sponsors Neil Murray, Esq. of O’Connell & Aronowitz (center) and Joseph Martello of HMM, CPA’s LLP (right).

Members had the opportunity to visit nearly 100 Exhibitors at the Expo.

Thanks to Convention Committee Chair, Greg Chambery (left) and Education Committee Chair, Larry Slatky (2nd from right).

Plans for next year’s Convention are already underway. In August, the NYSFHA/NYSICAL team toured the Westchester Hilton in Rye, NY. The Convention will be held June 24 – 27, 2018.
The 2017 Session officially adjourned on June 21st, yet legislative and regulatory activity have continued in the New York State Capitol during the Summer months. Throughout the 2017 Session, NYSFA/NYSAL advanced several key initiatives, while ensuring several bills were not brought for consideration in front of the Legislature due to potentially negative impacts on skilled nursing and assisted living providers.

**Congressional Update**

During July 2017, NYSFA/NYSAL worked with the American Health Care Association (AHCA) to mitigate the impact of the repeal and replace efforts from the Senate and House with respect to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The attempt to repeal and replace the landmark healthcare legislation drastically changed the mechanism by which the Medicaid program is funded and could have resulted in $800 billion in funding cuts. NYSFA/NYSAL worked diligently during this time to assess the impact to our members and the estimated 50,000 individuals they serve. The bills failed to pass, however Medicaid reform attempts are likely to be ongoing.

The following is a brief summary of certain initiatives that were advanced during the end of the 2017 New York State Legislative Session:

- **Bed Hold Payments**
  
  *(S.6559, Hannon/A.8338, Gottfried; Passed Both Houses)*

  This legislation includes a restoration of the current 50% reimbursement to nursing homes for Bed Hold days. Fully restores the Bed Hold cuts that were removed by the 2017-2018 State Budget. This bill has not yet been delivered to the Governor for consideration.

- **Nursing Home Rate Cell**

  While the State’s transition to Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC) advances, there continue to be payment shortages for both plans and providers. NYSFA/NYSAL has been working collaboratively with DOH to address issues with contracting and reimbursement as they arise. NYSFA/NYSAL will continue to encourage the establishment of a separate nursing home rate cell intended to replace the blended rate methodology as immortalized in a “side letter” during the State Budget negotiations. NYSFA/NYSAL strongly believes MLTCs must be funded by a methodology that accurately assesses the complexity of each plan’s enrollees.

- **Assisted Living Program (ALP) Certificate of Need (CON)**

  *(A.7727-A, Lupardo/ S.5840, Hannon; Passed Both Houses)*

  Provides a CON process for the distribution of ALP slots to replace the current competitive solicitation process. This bill allows for ALP slots to be provided through a needs-based process and has an expedited approval built-in for up to nine ALP slots per provider. This bill has not yet been delivered to the Governor, but discussions with the Division of Budget (DOB) and Governor Cuomo’s office are ongoing.

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Increase**

  *(S.6732, Serino/A.6715-B, Brindisi; Passed Both Houses)*

  Provides an essential increase in the State share of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) rate for Adult Care Facilities (ACFs). The current rate of $40.60 per day is not sufficient to provide care, housing, meals, case management, medication assistance, housekeeping, and activities. This legislation proposes a phased-in rate increase of $20 per day over five years and has not yet been delivered to the Governor.

- **Workgroup Participation**

  NYSFA/NYSAL is actively participating in numerous State-run workgroups. The Department of Health (DOH) has begun the Regulatory Modernization Initiative with an initial focus on post-acute care management. Additional workgroups NYSFA/NYSAL will participate in will be the Need Methodologies & Innovative Models Workgroup and The First 1,000 Days. The latter is hosted by the United Hospital Fund (UHF) and the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT).

- **1% Across the Board (ATB) Restoration**

  NYSFA/NYSAL is working with AHCA to secure CMS approval of a New York State Plan (SPA) Amendment, which would provide 1% increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for nursing homes back to April 1, 2014. The SPA was submitted after the 2% Across the Board (ATB) payment reduction and serves as a partial restoration of the 2% annual uniform reduction of Medicaid payments to nursing home providers.

Please feel free to contact Stephen B. Hanse, Esq. or Lauren E. Pollow if you have questions or need additional information regarding these or any other legislative/regulatory matters.
Workforce: Your Greatest Asset

Providers are always on the search for great people to fill vacant positions in their adult home or assisted living community. Why are there always vacancies? Why do people leave? What can we do to make them want to stay? Are we doing something wrong during the hiring process? How can we motivate the staff that stay to perform at the optimal level and provide great care? Easy - you need to give them the resources and tools to make them successful.

Our industry has turnover - not as high as other settings but still, it can be a challenge. Much research has been put into how to improve hiring practices and the development and implementation of great employee programs. But, how do we actually translate the research into practice at our homes?

Look at your hiring process. Who is involved? Does it change for the position being hired? Many times, utilizing staff outside the department being hired for can provide an extra and neutral lens looking at the candidates. Other times, it may be useful to use the instinct and skills of your residents during the hiring process. For example, if you are hiring an activities/recreational professional, invite the residents to screen the candidates. The residents will have the most interaction with this individual so it only seems reasonable they provide their thoughts and evaluations to you as the leader in the community.

Develop and implement a buddy program for new staff. Even if the person has experience a mile long in assisted living, they have not worked at your community, nor do they know your residents. By implementing a buddy program, this gives opportunity to current staff to raise the bar in their performance so they can be the buddy for the new worker. The new person has a committed, experienced co-worker to show them the community, the systems and processes for the community and gives them an immediate friend.

Training. Long term care has long been known for promoting well performing staff into supervisory/leadership roles based on their past performance. However, without necessary training for the new job, the newly promoted manager/leader may not perform well; management gets frustrated and annoyed, and the person either leaves or is fired. We as leaders in our community must give our staff the tools and resources to do their job. We must do all that we can to make them successful.

Develop and implement a reward and recognition program. As the administrator of the community, this may not be a priority, but reward and recognition is important to the majority of your staff. If you don’t have a program and you have high turnover, why not try developing a program? A reward and recognition may easily be developed based on feedback from your staff. Find out what is important to them and use their ideas to create a program.

Remember the formula for success - happy staff equals happy residents equals happy families’ equals successful operations and outcomes!
Patient Choice in Post-Acute Care – Does it Exist Anymore?

In an era of Accountable Care Organizations (ACO’s), bundled payments, and an increased effort to improve care coordination, patient choices for post-acute care are likely to become limited. These patients may be steered to skilled nursing facilities based on where the hospital has created their own relationship with downstream providers. If there is any steerage at all, it should be to the best providers for the quality of services that they are able to provide and not for concerns that make them vulnerable to Medicare readmission penalties.

It is not a secret at this point that hospitals “soft steer” patients during the discharge process, as certain facilities are highlighted or otherwise identified as being better than others. The implementation of readmission penalties only incentivizes hospitals to take a closer look at what SNFs they do business with. It may be easier for hospital facilities to be up front and clear about their discharge process.

- It is easier to achieve high quality care coordination when the post-acute providers that the patients are referred to achieve excellent results.
- Effective cost control occurs when volume is funneled to only two or three providers.
- Hospitals may depend on the beneficiary having more choice in their choice of primary care and depending on the hospital facility to find them the best post-acute provider.

What can a post-acute provider do?

NYSFA/ NYSCAL continues to emphasize the importance of understanding readmission rates at the hospital level, knowing the market position at key referral sources and identifying volume risk and volume potential. It is vital for you to do the following:

- Know your current market share for each referring provider as well as each competitor.
- Promote, Promote, Promote your readmission rate.
- Develop a niche, caring for a subset of patients that your competitors do not care for and will stand out to the health facilities in your market.

Pressures to be part of hospital networks will continue to build. It is imperative to be at the table with key providers in your network. Failure to do this will lead to less referrals, open beds and an uncertain future.

Reimbursement Update

Medicaid

The Department of Health (“DOH”) has published the 7/1/17 rates, which include the January 2017 MDS collections. DOH has committed to updating the benchmark rates accordingly, once the revised rates are posted. The 2018 notice rates are scheduled to be released this month. Members should carefully verify their initial 2018 capital rate, as the opportunity to correct via the Capital Attestation process will once again be available. DOH’s recent capital reimbursement webinar will be archived, and responses to frequently asked questions will be available on the DOH website. DOH will be re-establishing the Capital Workgroup to discuss long range plans for capital reimbursement methodology. NYSFA has submitted a number of participants to DOH for the Workgroup.

Minimum Wage

The results of the minimum wage survey which was completed during August is presently being reviewed by DOH. The data will be utilized to forecast the appropriate rate adjustment for mandated 2018 minimum wage increases. In addition, DOH will utilize the data to reconcile the 1/1/17 minimum wage rate add-on.

ATI

During Fourth Quarter 2017, DOH will once again initiate the Advanced Training Initiative (ATI) subject to CMS approval. Eligible facilities will again be required to complete a survey to select among various training programs, with funding expected sometime during first quarter 2018. The ATI provides training for certain direct care staff to more readily detect patient declines and thus avoid unnecessary hospitalizations. Approximately $46M has been funded to eligible facilities in each of the last two years.

Equity Withdrawal

NYSFA continues to monitor finalization of the owners’ equity withdrawal revisions. We continue to strongly advocate for the exclusion of income tax payments from the equity withdrawal requirements. Members should expect a DAL and revised equity withdrawal form in the near future.

MDS Audits

OMIG has completed the 2014 MDS audits and have been gathering information with respect to the 2015 audits, which should be underway this Fall.

Universal Settlement

The Universal Settlement’s third installment payment is still at DOB awaiting final approval. The terms of the agreement stipulate that the payment must be made no later than the end of the current state fiscal year (3/31/18).

Medicare

CMS has issued its Final Rule with respect to the SNF PPS Medicare rates. NYSFA has calculated the PPS rates, effective 10/1/17, which are posted on the NYSFA website. The overall market basket increase for FY 2017/18 is 1.0%, but will vary depending on each statewide region’s final wage index. CMS has also rebased the market basket base year from 2010 to 2014. The Final Rule also proposes to impose a 2% rate reduction penalty for providers who do not meet the fiscal year 2018 Quality Reporting Program (QRP).
What’s New at the Foundation for Quality Care

The FQC has been excited about this year’s overall educational programming and grant funded projects. One of our main goals this year has been to assist Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living Facilities’ leadership teams focus on effective management and leadership within the fast-paced changing health care environment. Our 2017 themes for education have focused on the CMS’ New Requirements of Participation for SNF, Person-Centered Care, Competencies and Scope of Practice for clinical staff, Managed Care and Improving Safe Transitions of Individuals Across the Healthcare Continuum. Starting in January, the FQC provided our annual Mid-Winter, Social Work and Activities, Nurse Leadership Conferences and our Annual Convention. Each of these initiatives were planned to provide interactive educational experiences of practical and applicable materials to utilize with their staff in the facilities.

We have been thrilled to have National and Statewide experts partnering with us to bring such wonderful resources to the table. As we move forward with our Fall schedule, we have a great lineup for both our 3rd Annual Emergency Preparation and our Fall Conferences to be held on September 27 and November 14-15, 2017 respectively. We hope you will join us at those events.

In addition, the FQC has been directing and implementing several Grant funded projects. The following is a short summary of each:

**NYS DOH Health Workforce Retraining Initiative:** This two-year grant was awarded to begin in January 1, 2017 and run through December 31, 2018. The FQC has conducted the eight-day Director of Nursing program in Rochester, two four-day Nurse Educator programs at SUNYPOLY/Utica, a four-day Assisted Living Nurse Leadership program in Syracuse and four Webinars reaching Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living staff from across the state during the first eight months of the year. Coming this Fall, we will begin our eight-day First Line Manager program, the four-day Quality Series and our new Assisted Living Executive Director program and webinar series.

**NYS DOH Customer Satisfaction Project:** 35 SNFs have conducted two customer satisfaction surveys and initiated performance improvement projects based on resident input during the two years of this project. The National Research Corporation has facilitated the actual satisfaction survey process and individual coaches have assisted each facility with their Quality Improvement work. The FQC held a meeting with our overall team of SNFs, Coaches and Partners on June 26, 2017 to assess progress, strengths and needs and held a webinar on our preliminary aggregate data results. The project was completed on July 31, 2017, however, based on our meeting outcomes from June, the FQC has requested a one year extension of this program to enhance sustainability of the progress made thus far and to trend data over another year’s time.

**Mouth Care Without a Battle:** The New York State Health Foundation awarded the FQC a two-year grant in May, 2017. This project will focus on improving oral health care in 24 SNF in Buffalo, Syracuse and Long Island. The initial goal is to provide hands on training on oral health care for RNs and CNAs utilizing the “Mouth Care Without a Battle” educational training program. This program was created by our project partner, Dr. Phillip Sloane.

These trained teams of RNs and CNAs will then work with a specific dental hygienist coach to implement and educate coworkers on the specific principles, techniques and strategies gleaned from the training program. The overall goals of the program are to improve oral health care, prevent infections and improve the residents’ quality of life.

**Emergency Preparation Projects:** the FQC was awarded three grants in July for both Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living programs to run from July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018. The new deliverables have just been agreed upon and implementation strategies are beginning for each.

We also have partnered with the American Health Care Association (AHCA) who is providing a 23-hour online program for Infection Preventionists working in post-acute care and the Wound Care Education Institute to provide courses to certify Wound Care clinicians and free webinars on associated topics for skin and wound care. Both of these programs are high priorities for quality resident care.

The Foundation is growing and changing as we move in to this next year. We are actively looking to: develop new programs or expand programs that hold value to the health care system; increase our partnerships with Academic groups, other Foundations, health care providers and funders; and to strengthen our ability to pursue our mission.
Art from the Heart Program Winners Selected

On behalf of the Foundation for Quality Care and the New York State Health Facilities Association/New York State Center for Assisted Living, we are pleased to announce that the artists have been selected for the 2018 Art from the Heart wall calendar.

We tasked our panel of independent jurors with the challenging assignment of choosing 13 pieces from 105 submissions provided by nursing home and assisted living residents from across the state. This year, a total of 72 member facilities participated in the program and entries were received from every NYSHFA/NYSCAL district. We recognize and applaud all the inspiring artists for sharing their talents. The 13 selected pieces will be featured in the 2018 “Art from the Heart” wall calendar.

Following are the names of the artists who will appear in the calendar:

**Angela Barricelli**
Sands Point Center for Health & Rehab
Port Washington, NY

**Timothy Bartholomew**
Northeast Center for Rehabilitation and Brain Injury
Lake Katrine, NY

**Duffy Brodsky**
Willow Towers Assisted Living
New Rochelle, NY

**Claire Cardinale**
Focus Rehabilitation & Nursing Center at Otsego
Cooperstown, NY

**Theresa Hajos**
The Pines at Heartwood
Troy, NY

**Elizabeth Lape**
Steuben Center
Bath, NY

**Elizabeth McCChesney**
Elderwood at Hornell
Hornell, NY

**Jon Park**
Northeast Center for Rehabilitation and Brain Injury
Lake Katrine, NY

**June Parks**
ElderWood at Amherst
Amherst, NY

**Jean Pysnik**
Focus Rehabilitation & Nursing Center at Otsego
Cooperstown, NY

**Michael Serrette**
Hedgewood Home for Adults
Beacon, NY

**Binny Thomas**
Richmond Center for Rehab & Specialty Care
Staten Island, NY

**Helena Weaver**
The Pines at Heartwood
Troy, NY

Special thanks to: Christopher Sanford; Jill Cozzy, New York State Museum; and local artist Wren Panzella, represented by the Sorelle Gallery; who provided their time and expertise in selecting our winners.

The “Art from the Heart” Program was launched as a way to honor the vibrant contributions and creative spirit of residents like yours. Thanks to our members who participated in the contest and providing the chance for your residents to shine.

If you have any questions about the Art from the Heart program, please contact Joanne O’Connor at the Foundation at 518-462-4800 ext. 23 or joconnor@nyshfa.org.
SAVE THE DATE

22nd Annual Fall Education Conference & Trade Show

November 14 - 15, 2017

Albany Marriott
189 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12205

Look for the Registration Brochure in your mail soon!