

WALA ADVOCATE

A white silhouette of the state of Wisconsin is positioned in the top right corner of the page, partially overlapping the 'ADVOCATE' text.

WISCONSIN ASSISTED LIVING ASSOCIATION • FALL 2023 VOL. 28 • NO. 2



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CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

By Crystal Miller , WALA Board Chairperson



As we are all enjoying these beautiful Wisconsin summer days (let's be honest, for most of us we tolerate living here because of our summers!) I know that we are all still working hard to keep our teams engaged in the important work that is happening in our communities. I was reminded of an article that I wrote back when this was called "WALA Watch" and I thought I'd resurrect it – because it was a fun story to tell and the truth is as important today as it was back in 2019. I hope that these concepts put a little gas in your tank as you lead and continue to make a difference!

What does team building look like at work? And what does teamwork mean to your fans? You know your fans, the people that love you even if you mess up, the ones who are your cheerleaders and will wave your flag on your good AND bad days!

I had the privilege of seeing P!NK perform at the Fiserve Forum. I wasn't sure what to expect, and what I experienced that night will stick with me - what a show! It was amazing to see Pink in action, exhibiting her art, but more than that, she created camaraderie among her bandmates and her fans.

Admittedly, I am not a huge follower of P!NK, but to see her work... so much fun. I am a student of leaders, and what I saw on stage that night was leadership in action.

One of the first things that stood out was Pink's vulnerability. It was evident that she sees herself as a real person with no walls. I was hundreds of feet away, and she made me feel seen. In a 2017 article in the New York Times, someone said of her: "She is the kind of person that a listener looks at and says, 'You know what, this person is like me.' She's not fake, she's not superficial, she's the real deal." I felt like I saw that in her, so it was affirming to read that!

Secondly, Pink made sure that her team members were acknowledged and appreciated. More than one time the names of her band members were on the big screen in graphics that in themselves must have made the person feel appreciated! Then, verbal acknowledgement – and more than once! It made me, the (soon to be!) fan, sit back and

appreciate their contributions too. Can you imagine how it made that band member, Pink's employee, feel?

The main thing that we can take away from my stellar experience with Pink is that she made herself visible to her fans. She did this in exactly (well okay maybe not exactly) the way we can do it, but you'll get the picture. Near the end of her show, Pink exhibited her legendary acrobatic and trapeze skills and actually came near enough to me that I felt like I could touch her – and I was in the mid-level at the end of the arena! She was VISIBLE! When she came near me, when she made me feel like I mattered, when it felt like she was looking me in the eye – just me, one of the thousands in the arena – she connected and created a fan, a team member of her unofficial fan club, for life.

So if Pink can do that for me, one of 17,000+ people, can we take her example and duplicate it with our teams who we can actually get close and personal with – even without acrobatic skills, video magicians, or props?

I know that when we exhibit vulnerability, acknowledge and appreciate our people, and are visible - out and about with our team members, residents, and families - we create fans. It's a tough world out here, we all need fans!

P.S. One more way that she made herself real... she ended the show in pajamas. Seriously! Her first 9 outfits were crazy elaborate, but her last one... pajamas. What more could we ask for?

WALA MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Assisted Living Association (WALA) is the largest trade association in Wisconsin representing the assisted living profession. Our mission is to support assisted living communities, staff, and residents through advocacy, education, and service.

Effective 2020, the WALA Watch is now the WALA Advocate. The WALA Advocate is the newsletter of the Wisconsin Assisted Living Association. Published in April, August, and December by the Wisconsin Assisted Living Association. Reprint permission available from WALA. All rights reserved. Promotional information and rates are available by contacting WALA. We reserve the right to decline promotions submitted for publication.

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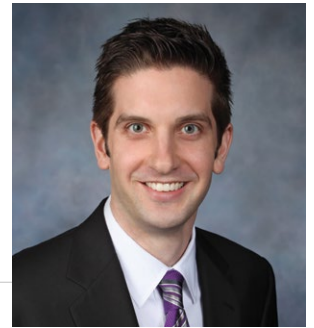
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CEO CORNER

By Mike Pochowski, WALA President & CEO



Thank you for everything you are doing to provide outstanding care and services to all of your residents. We know this continues to be an unbelievably difficult time enduring a caregiver and staffing crisis. Please know you are doing an amazing job and we are thankful for everything you are doing.

I would like to also thank all of the attendees who participated in our Legislative

Day Event on April 20th. You did a great job advocating for increased funding into Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative and a continuation of the 5% Family Care Rate Increase that went into effect on January 1, 2022. Attendees met with over 50 representatives and senators advocating for these issues.

Because of yours and WALA's advocacy efforts, we were happy to report Governor Evers and the state legislature approved these key funding proposals in the biennial budget. This includes an additional \$38 million into the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative. I had the honor of being invited to attend the budget signing ceremony when Governor Evers

signed the 2023-25 Wisconsin State Budget in early July.

Also, we are very much looking forward to our upcoming Fall Conference which is taking place on September 19th and 20th at the Brookfield Conference Center in Brookfield, WI. Our Fall Conference is offering 21 educational breakout sessions with 8 available CEUs and will showcase representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) who will provide the opening remarks.



In addition, there will be a number of networking opportunities, access to industry experts, exhibitors, and sponsors. The agenda and registration information can be found on our website – www.ewala.org.

Thank you for your continued support and membership in WALA, we greatly appreciate it.

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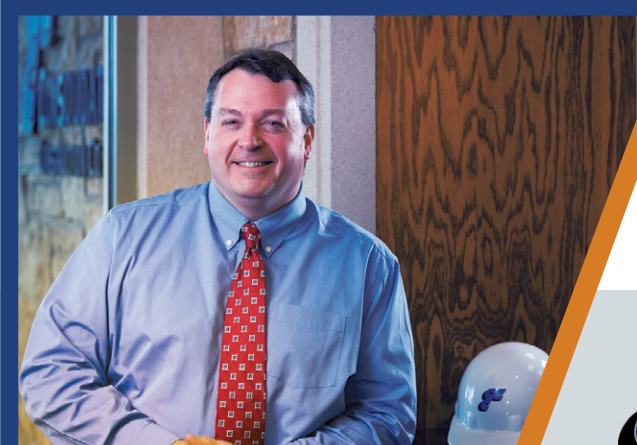
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THE LEGAL EDGE

The Legal Edge is a regular feature column authored by the Assisted Living and Long Term Care Group at the [Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren law firm](#) featuring Bob Lightfoot, RN. Bob Lightfoot can be reached at 608-229-2257 or rlightfoot@reinhartlaw.com.

NURSE DELEGATION

As a nurse myself, Nurse Delegation is a topic near and dear to me. I give a lot of presentations on the subject and it seems to always be important and relevant to assisted living operations. The regulations at DHS 83, DHS 88 and DHS 89 are not always clear as to the need for nurse delegation or how it is to be implemented, but all the assisted living regulations reference delegation in some way. The key for your operation is to ensure that if Nurse Delegation is occurring at your facility, that it is being performed according to the nursing and assisted living regulations and that you are documenting it.

Nurse Delegation consists of:

1. Delegating tasks appropriate to the education and demonstrated abilities of the caregiver
2. Providing direction and assistance to the caregiver
3. Observing and monitoring the tasks of the caregiver
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of the delegated task as performed by the caregiver.

Crucial for assisted living nurses who are delegating is that they understand they are delegating, that they are following what Wisconsin Administrative Code Nurse 6 (N6) says about Nurse Delegation, and that the caregiver being delegated to understands their important role in the delegation process.

The nurse should also have an understanding of general supervision (not needing to be on-site) versus direct supervision (being onsite) of delegated nursing tasks. The nurse should use their professional judgment as to what type of supervision to implement. For instance, an experienced

reliable caregiver might only need general supervision just as a new inexperienced caregiver might need more direct hands-on supervision.

Finally, document the Nurse Delegation. Document the task, the supervision, any on-site "spot-checks", and any follow up caregiver training by the nurse or facility relative to the task delegated.

Nurse Delegation has become increasingly important as more nurses work in assisted living communities. Understanding Nurse Delegation is paramount to its proper implementation and will help to protect the nurse from liability if an adverse event occurs during the performance of a delegated task.

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WHY SENIOR LIVING, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO ESG

by Marleah Keuler Grahek, Risk Manager, M3 Insurance

“ESG” seems to be becoming the new buzzword, but what does this actually mean in the context of care industries?

In short, ESG focuses on a company’s behavior regarding their Environmental, Social, and Governance practices. Although the concept of ESG, or corporate responsibility, has been around for some time, it is now trickling down to organizations outside of the publicly traded space. While not a requirement in the healthcare, senior living, and social service spaces, there is an argument behind the business strategy to embrace ESG. Reasons as to why senior living, social service, and healthcare organizations may want to consider thoughtful ESG efforts include:

- **Building a trusted brand amongst consumers, workforce, and the community at large.** [Consumers and other stakeholders are more environmentally and socially conscious than ever before.](#) A living, breathing ESG effort may help strengthen an organization’s presence in the community as a reputable provider.
- **Aiding in recruitment and retention efforts.** In today’s labor market, particular in these industries, it is imperative to be an employer of choice. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a major component of ESG, and when done correctly can aid in attracting, engaging, and retaining a diverse workforce. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) may be an introductory area of DEI for employees to start exploring.
- **Strengthen defensibility in regards to liability claims.** An organization’s ESG efforts may come into play in the event of litigation. This can help to clearly communicate with jurors and others the important services the organization offers in a community, along with strong and ethical governance standards.
- **Increase desirability to investors and lenders.** From a mergers and acquisitions standpoint, potential acquirers may seek additional information regarding the ESG status of the organization it is looking to acquire. ESG is also becoming a consideration for lenders when reviewing loan requests. Additionally, ESG may help defend tax-exempt status for nonprofits.

- **Opportunity for cost savings and revenue growth.** Such components as implementing energy-efficient technology, reducing waste in the supply chain, decreased employee turnover, reduced costs in liability claims and premiums, and being a desirable investment opportunity may lead to improved overall financial performance.

The mission and services of care industry providers naturally fits in with concepts of ESG. Organizations may already have many components of ESG in place, but may now want to consider how they are evidencing and communicating these practices with stakeholders.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH AN ESG FRAMEWORK AND GOALS:

- Support from C-suite leaders and the Board of Directors is critical.
- Do not feel like everything needs to be figured out before you start. Identify what initiatives are already in place that fit into ESG. Define what matters most to the organization and what is the purpose of ESG for you.
- Create a committee or workgroup, and determine who will own ESG in the organization.
- Identify priorities of focus based on organizational needs.
- Start with G and S. Strong governance is a key component to the framework of ESG, so consider fine tuning the Corporate Compliance Program. DEI may be a great place to focus efforts for the “Social” component, if there is not yet a formal organizational structure around.
- Assess and plan for how the important work done in the organization and overall community impact is evidenced and communicated to stakeholders.

There are unique risk management and insurance coverage considerations for each organization. For additional information on ESG and how it may affect your senior living, social service, or health care organization, please contact your M3 Account Executive.



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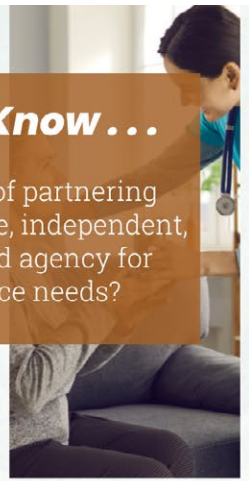
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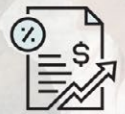
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FASTMEDICAL: ENHANCING CARE THROUGH FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING

There is an ever-increasing number of residents that require higher acuity and complex medical care in Wisconsin, and the current healthcare system heavily relies on assisted living organizations to cater to these evolving needs. Unfortunately, the lack of standardized assessment measures and staffing patterns leaves facilities ill-equipped to handle these challenges.

FACILITIES IN WISCONSIN

In Wisconsin alone, there are 1,623 Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRF), 2,057 Adult Family Homes (AFH) and 356 Residential Care Apartment Complexes (RCAC) totaling 59,106 residents in need of appropriate care.

THE PROBLEM

Some key issues our nurse-founded company has recognized through years of experience in the industry:

- There is no standardized objective assessment process.
- Inappropriate admissions of high care need residents.
- Inability to determine the skilled nursing and staffing ratio requirements.
- Inconsistent assessments of similar acuity level patients.

AGING POPULATION 65 OR OLDER IN WISCONSIN

According to the U.S. Census Bureau for Population Estimates and Projections the aging population of 65 and older will substantially increase to 118% by 2040.

Statistics

- 16% of the population in 2019
- 20% of the population in 2030
- 21.6% of the population in 2040

THE SOLUTION

Standardizing an objective assessment tool for the assisted living market and building transparency to better serve our aging population.

KEY FEATURES

- Cloud-based application
- Objective resident data
- Personal care worker and registered nurse hour allotment calculation
- Referral management
- Plan of care overview
- Compliance management
- Data analytics
- Low Cost
- Easy to use and implementation

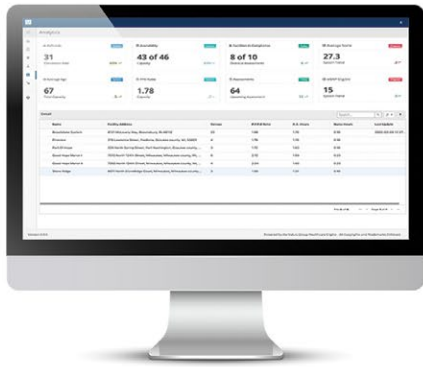
COMPREHENSIVE LEVELING TOOL

FASTMedical doesn't just offer customizable medical records for assessments, it provides invaluable analytics, clinical capabilities, automated alerts, and CMS compliant recommendations for skilled nursing services. This standardized approach eliminates the subjective nature of assessments prevalent in the industry, ensuring residents receive care that aligns with their clinical needs and prevents negative outcomes, such as unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency room visits.

The leveling tool utilizes objective questionnaires to score individuals on a weighted scale of 0-100, quantifying the amount of time needed to meet their specific needs. This assessment provides informed recommendations for appropriate staffing levels, and ensures facilities can provide quality of care tailored to the clinical capabilities they offer.

CONCLUSION

Be part of the solution and empower your facilities approach with a standardized data driven solution to meet the ever-evolving needs of your residents while continuously improving the overall healthcare system with the FASTMedical assessment tool.



Functional Assessment Screening Tool

ELEVATE YOUR FACILITY'S STANDARD OF CARE

- Assists your team in contract negotiations with correct data when taking higher acuity residents.
- Measure and track referral outcomes at your facility.
- Monitor acuity of residents while meeting annual assessment regulatory requirements.
- Recognize correct staffing patterns needed for each resident.

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WALA's 83.15 CBRF ADMINISTRATOR COURSE



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WALA is pleased to announce dates for our 2023 83.15 Administrator's Course. Whether you prefer the flexibility of online learning or thrive with in-person instruction, we've got you covered in 2023.

UPCOMING SESSION

October 17-19 - DeForest, WI
October 24-26 - DeForest, WI
October 31-November 2 - DeForest, WI

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PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY FOR SEVERE WEATHER IN LESS THAN AN HOUR

In the Midwest, severe storms can come out of nowhere. In fact, most of our region's biggest damage risks are the result of inclement weather.

There are several steps you should follow year-round to make sure your property is prepared for the rain, wind and lightning. But what can you do in the moments after the weather channel sounds the alarm and before the storm actually hits? Let's take a look at the quickest, highest impact tasks you can tackle when you know severe weather is on the way.

DOUBLE CHECK YOUR EMERGENCY DAMAGE PLAN

First things first: know what you'll do if weather-related damage does strike your property. Your emergency damage plan should outline your building's insurance coverage, unique risk factors and a list of emergency restoration companies you can trust to clean things up.

HAVE YOUR EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT READY

You should always keep an emergency survival kit handy in your home and business. Be sure to include:

- Drinking water
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered radio
- Standard first aid kit
- Copies of important personal or business documents

Keep your survival kit in an easy to find location. By having all of these items easily accessible from the get go, you'll be able to devote more of the precious time before the storm rolls in to other tasks.

CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS

Water damage is one of the most common (and most expensive) weather-related problems in the Midwest. It comes in the form of everything from flash floods to silent mold growth – and it costs property owners thousands of dollars each year. Many preventable leaks can be prevented with one simple trick: keep an eye on your gutters!

You should routinely clean your gutters and downspouts at least twice per year. If you have time before a storm hits, it's a good idea to give them an extra sweep. This will make sure your drainage system is working at peak capacity to prevent water from accumulating on your roof.

LOCK ALL WINDOWS AND DOORS

Another way to prevent water damage is to make sure all openings to the outside world are properly sealed. You can do this by:

- Firmly closing and locking your windows
- Securing your doors
- Stuffing towels or other absorbent fabric in any draft spaces

DO A QUICK OUTSIDE SWEEP

When you get word of a severe storm creeping in, head outside and take a lap around your property. Be on the lookout for any immediate problems you can fix quickly like:

- Loose planters, personal belongings or other objects that could turn into flying debris during high winds
- Weak or dead tree branches, especially those near your property's windows
- Cracks in your building's siding that can be sealed with a can of foam

STAY SAFE INSIDE AND ASSESS ANY DAMAGE WHEN THE STORM HAS CLEARED

Make sure you are securely indoors before the storm's rain, wind and lightning hit. It's better to leave a few building tasks unfinished if it means you'll be safe – don't stress to clean your gutters or secure loose lawn ornaments at the expense of your wellbeing.

Once the weather has cleared, head outside to evaluate the property for any damage. Walk the perimeter of your property and document anything that looks unusual, like:

- Broken glass
- Missing roof shingles
- Damaged window shutters
- Dislodged door or window frames
- Fallen tree branches
- Excess pooling of water

If you notice any damage, get in touch with a restoration company right away! They'll be able to assess the damage, board up any broken windows or doors and get things back to normal as soon as possible.

About Revive Restoration: The team at Revive Restoration, Inc. has the skills and experience to handle even the toughest damage. You can count on us to be professional, efficient, and detail-oriented as we make things right again. Learn more about our services [here](#).

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FALL PREVENTION FOR OPTIMAL LIVING

by Danielle Norris, MS, OTR/L, BCG, RAC-CT, Phyt Rehab

Did you know that falls are largely preventable in the older adult population? And yet, each year more than one in four older adults aged 65 and older experience a fall, with over 3 million treated in the emergency department (CDC). Take a moment and think about your own community. How many falls occur in your community each day, month or even year? Since many falls are preventable, you can ACT today to reduce the risk factors in your community's older adult population. Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors that an older adult has, the greater risk of falling. Let's take a moment to review types of behavioral and physical risk factors to avoid the risk of falls to maintain safe and independent aging in your residential community.

MOST COMMON FALL RISK FACTORS	EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONAL IMPACT
History of Falls or Fear of Falling	Reduced confidence in walking and activities
Vitamin D Deficiency	Decreased bone density, weakness, or loss of strength
Difficulties with Walking and Balance	Reduced activity, leading to decreased strength
Medication (i.e., tranquilizers, sedatives, antidepressants)	Dizziness, lightheadedness, drop in blood pressure, slow response to mobility, blurred vision
Visual Changes or Impairments	Blurry or distorted vision, difficulty seeing objects, decreased depth perception
Foot Pain, Improper Footwear or Clothing	Tripping over clothing or shoes that do not fit
Home & Environmental Hazards	Tripping over cords, clutter, unclear walkways, lack of proper lighting
Memory Problems or Depression	Decreased safety awareness, judgement, problem solving

HOME AND ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS:

- Keep pathways clear. Remove objects that are a trip hazard.
- Be aware of uneven surfaces such as in doorways or between carpet and tiles.
- Remove throw rugs or use an anti-slip mat.
- Keep frequently used items close by to prevent reaching up too high or bending down too low
- Light up the path with bright lights and night lights.

5 WAYS TO PREVENT FALLS TODAY IN THE OLDER ADULT POPULATION!

- Review medication list with interdisciplinary team members.
- Receive a balance and mobility screening with a Physical or Occupational Therapist.

- Participate in an individualized wellness program (i.e., strength, balance, walking).
- Reduce internal and physical fall risk factors.
- Receive a home and community safety and fall risk assessment.

Did you know that researchers have found that higher levels of physical activity can reduce the risk of a fall? Although an older adult may think that being sedentary or inactive is safer than being active, it reduces overall strength, balance, and functional performance, thus contributing to the risk of falls. The older adult then begins to limit activities and enjoyments in life. Do you know an individual who already limits activities and interests, due to a fear of falling and walking long distances?

At Phyt Rehab, the Occupational, Physical and Speech Therapists are experts in fall prevention, due to their ability to assess balance, strength, functional mobility, Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs), functional cognition, safety awareness and home environment. It is recommended for older adults to participate in an individualized therapeutic assessment to identify and mitigate fall risk factors to safely age in place with optimal quality of life. The licensed therapy professional at Phyt Rehab can also help facilitate confidence in functional mobility and participation in desired and valued occupations. Furthermore, working together with the interdisciplinary team in the community can help facilitate an individualized plan to ensure participation in meaningful activities and living life to the fullest each day. I encourage you to take a moment to think about ways that you can reduce the risk of falls in your community TODAY.

Resources/Sources Cited:

[Management of falls in community-dwelling older adults: clinical guidance statement from the Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy of the American Physical Therapy Association](#)

[CDC: Keep on Your Feet](#)

[CDC: Fact Sheet Older Adult Falls](#)



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PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE KEY FOR EQUIPMENT LONGEVITY

We all like to be comfortable, especially in places where it should feel like home. Ensuring that everyone is comfortable and happy is a big responsibility. Choosing the right preventative maintenance plan can make a big impact on your facility's bottom line. Consider partnering with an experienced company that offers routine preventative maintenance and knows the importance of taking care of the specialized equipment that is behind the scenes. A preventative maintenance plan ensures that your HVAC (Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning) systems are taken care of, so you won't have to lift a finger. Along with preventative maintenance plans, a skilled company can also help you find energy incentives to save money! From boilers to heat pumps, even your furnaces! A skilled team can help find incentives and rebates, so that the money you get back can go right into reinvesting into the comfort of your assisted living community.

From Boilers to heat pumps and furnaces, those are just some of the types of equipment that are eligible for energy incentives. When choosing a company, consider one that is a part of Focus on Energy, a statewide energy efficiency program. The right partnership can help find rebates and incentives on these types of equipment so you can have extra cash to make your location top notch. A partner like Helm will come to your location and walk through the facility, take an assessment of your equipment, and formulate based on the SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) how much money you would get back and how much you can save. Focus on Energy can also help save money by having your HVAC company keep up with tune ups and regular assessments of equipment. Keeping your equipment frequently maintained will help it last longer, lower the cost of repairs, and save energy.

We all need hot water, nice warm air in the winter and cool air in the summer. The equipment that provides all these great things needs constant care to ensure it doesn't break when

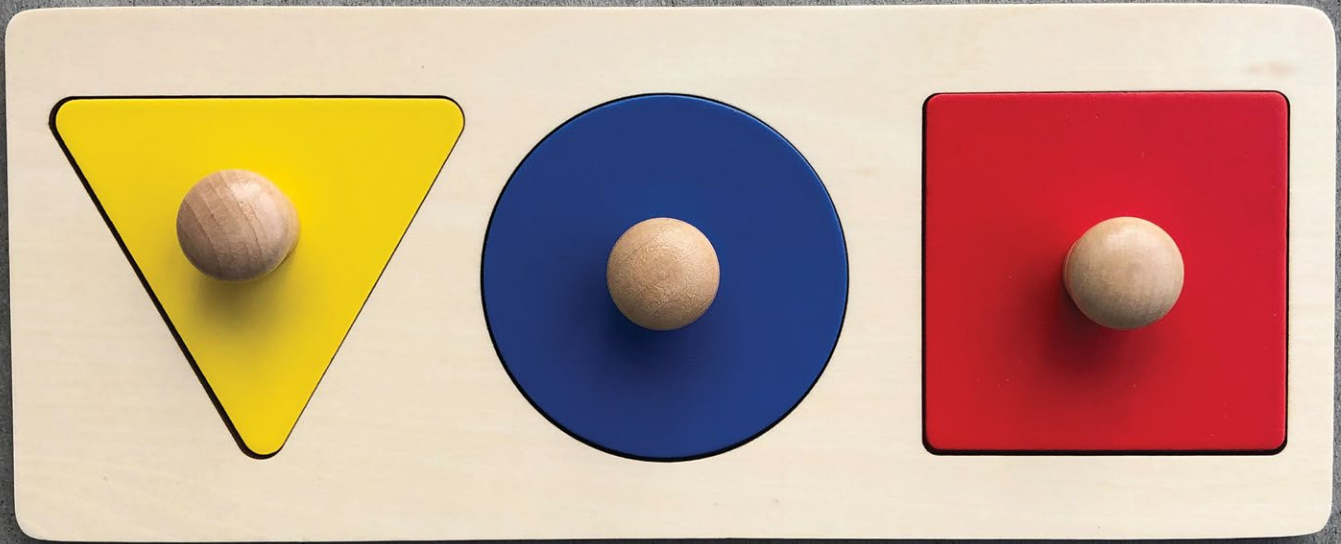
you need it the most. Performing preventive maintenance can help ensure that the equipment is operating at its best, can help find issues so small and repair them before they become a bigger problem, and help save money. A knowledgeable HVAC company will check your roof top units for any leaks, clean coils to ensure airflow is nice and strong, and tighten up all bolts to make sure nothing gets loose. In doing this maintenance, they can ensure that during the winter, your facility receives nice warm air, and the cool breeze in the summer. Hot water is essential for any assisted living facility. You use it to wash linens, clean floors, and wash hands. Keeping up with regular boiler maintenance helps keep running hot water going all year long. You should expect that your HVAC company will check for any leaks, ensure all valves are working properly, and check the burners to make sure they're heating properly.

Once all preventative maintenance is complete, you should receive a detailed service report. This includes the equipment that was worked on and a detailed checklist showing exactly what was done, so that there are no surprises. A professional maintenance program will help keep your facility not only running at its best, but healthy as well. Helm understands the importance of keeping all areas of a facility comfortable, not just for the workers, but for the residents that call your place home.

It is extremely important to have essential equipment fixed, and waiting till the next morning can be frustrating. When selecting a professional HVAC maintenance company, evaluate their emergency response protocol and if possible, find one with 24/7 emergency service.

About Helm Group

At Helm, our goal is comfort, optimal equipment performance, and savings. Helm can provide all three! Our team knows the importance of comfort for your facility. Our preventative maintenance plans with 24/7 emergency response will ensure your comfort all year round, help invest in rebates, and get your equipment to the performance it was at when it was brand new!



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