

WALA ADVOCATE

A white silhouette of the state of Wisconsin is positioned in the upper right corner of the page, partially overlapping the 'ADVOCATE' portion of the main title.

WISCONSIN ASSISTED LIVING ASSOCIATION • SUMMER 2021 VOL. 26 • NO. 2



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Pam Preston, WALA Board President



Our mission is to support providers in enhancing the best quality of life for Wisconsin residents in assisted living through advocacy, education, communication, and quality initiatives. I'd like to highlight our education and advocacy work in this message.

After over a year of virtual meetings and conferences, we are eagerly anticipating our in-person WALA Fall Conference. It will be held September 14–15 at the Ingelside Hotel in Pewaukee, and it promises to be an outstanding two days. In addition to the opportunity to visit and share best practices with industry leaders and colleagues, we have a myriad of excellent, informative sessions planned. Topics range from a panel discussion with DHS leaders, navigating quality hiring and retention practices in this tough job market, supporting caregivers and families in these challenging times, and COVID-related topics like vaccinations, visitation, and screening. There is something for everyone. To take advantage of our early-bird rates, please register by August 13. I look forward to seeing you there!

On the advocacy front, WALA continues to work assiduously to advocate for issues that impact you. One notable issue that impacts our industry significantly is the caregiver shortage, and WALA's advocacy this year has been highly focused on the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative. As Mike shared in recent communications, included in the final 2021–2023 state budget is a continuation and increased funding (\$104m- all funds) into the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative. This is such an important step in helping to address the workforce crisis, allowing you to increase wages for your caregivers. We are grateful to Governor Evers and the legislature and to you, the providers, who contacted your legislators and shared your stories and your perspectives.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued focus on always providing quality care, especially in the pandemic. We can't repeat enough how much you and your teams make a profound difference every day. We are here to support you, so please don't hesitate to reach out to our WALA team any time.

Thank you,

Pam

WALA MISSION STATEMENT

Wisconsin Assisted Living Association's mission is to support providers in enhancing the best quality of life for residents in assisted living in Wisconsin through advocacy, education, communication, and quality initiatives.

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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CEO CORNER

By Mike Pochowski, WALA CEO

Thank you for everything you are doing to provide outstanding care and services to all of your residents. We know this is an unbelievably difficult time as you continue to work on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic while also enduring a caregiver and staffing crisis that is the worst it has ever been. Please know you are doing an amazing job and we are truly thankful for everything you are doing and continue to do. You are the true heroes.

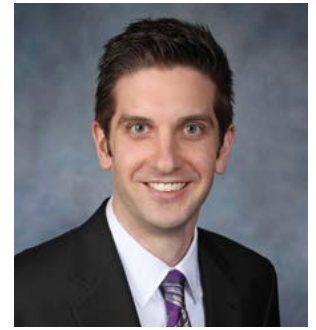
Over these past several months, it has been our pleasure to advocate on your behalf, and we are happy to report a number of successes. This includes:

- Governor Evers and the state legislature finalized the 2021–23 state budget, which includes a continuation and increased funding (\$104m all funds) into the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative.
- \$54.1 million was deposited into the Family Care Program - that equates to a 4.24%-unit rate increase on covered services/3.51% when calculated on covered (care/treatment) and non-covered services (room and board).
- The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) submitted its plan to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), proposing changes and enhancements to the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) programs, such as Family Care. Included within this plan is a proposal to institute a rate band/rate setting process and an infusion of more funding into the Family Care program.
- Continuous meetings were held with leadership at the Department of Health Services (DHS), Division of Medicaid Services (DMS), Division of Public Health (DPH), and the Bureau of Assisted Living (BAL).

I also need to stress the importance of our WALA-PAC. It enables us to support elected officials, both Democrats and Republicans, who understand assisted living and who are in a position to support policies that enhance the lives of assisted living residents. No contribution is too small, and every dollar helps ensure that critical priorities are addressed. Every single contribution to the WALA-PAC is greatly appreciated, and you can provide a personal contribution (corporate contributions are not allowed) on our website at ewala.org/page/advocacy.

Finally, I hope to see all of you at our upcoming in-person events. These include our golf event on September 1, 2021 at the University Ridge Golf Course in Madison, WI and our Fall Conference on September 14–15, 2021 at the Ingleside Hotel in Pewaukee, WI. Our Fall Conference is offering 22 educational breakout sessions with 7.3 available CEUs and 5.25 NAB credits. In addition, there will be a number of networking opportunities, access to industry experts, exhibitors, and sponsors, as well as a panel discussion with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) leadership. 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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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.

NAVIGATING A REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT THAT'S STORMING BACK

Last year was all about infection control — not so much the regulation of it as just maintaining it and trying to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Enter 2021.

Regulatory oversight is storming back. No more or very few virtual surveys; we're back to the reality of in-person inspections. Boy are we ever. While we don't have the usual "State of Assisted Living" data from BAL as to "citation du jour," it's clear that the focus of regulatory surveys is no longer simply infection control. Still, the angst among providers to continue to be compliant with their COVID-19 protocols and ever-changing guidance remains. From testing to vaccination to OSHA now entering the picture, what are providers to do?

As BAL preaches, the information on its website is "guidance." The mere fact that it is guidance, however, does not mean citations are off the table should BAL find you are not complying with its or CDC's guidance. For example, the DHS 83.39 Infection Control Program regulation states "The licensee shall establish and follow an infection control program based on current standards of practice . . ." The key there is obviously

"current standards of practice." That's where the guidance comes into play. The takeaway is to stay on top of the DHS and CDC guidance as to testing, infection prevention, vaccinations, and other issues, such as visitation and screening. At the time of this writing, the most current DHS guidance can be found here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/assisted-living.htm>. In addition, be sure to attend the BAL Forums, which have decreased in frequency but which provide the most current guidance and the opportunity for Q&A. Here is the website for the DHS Assisted Living Forums: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/regulations/assisted-living/asstdlvg-forum.htm>.

Continue to remain diligent. You're dealing with not only surveys looking at infection control but the host of issues facing your assisted living communities. We're not out of the woods yet, but we can get there as long as providers don't let their foot off the pedal too much. According to DHS statistics, the seven-day average of new confirmed COVID-19 cases has risen to 156 from just 69 at the end of June 2021.

Given the spread of the COVID-19 variants such as the Delta variant, I guess I'll be flying United.

WALA THANKS OUR ELITE BUSINESS SPONSORS



EMPLOYEES' FIRST DAYS ON THE JOB AFFECT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO STAY

By Cara Silletto, MBA, and Leah Brown – [Magnet Culture](#)

As companies prepare and adapt for the shorter-term workforce today, onboarding becomes an even more crucial piece to the retention puzzle. An evaluation and potential revamp of your orientation and onboarding processes may be critical for greater staffing stability moving forward.

BEFORE DAY ONE

Even before day one on the job, new hires should know what to expect. They should know where to go, what to wear (like no leggings), and whether they should bring their own lunch on their first day. These are things managers or HR can easily communicate to new employees and yet many fail to relay the message thinking those instructions are “common sense.” But it’s simple to avoid day-one misunderstandings by addressing common missteps of previous new hires, so make the easy effort to communicate your expectations more clearly before they arrive and they’ll be less likely to miss the boat.

ORIENTATION & ONBOARDING

Once new hires get in the building, it’s important to keep the communication rolling to avoid future misunderstandings. If your company’s employees consistently miss the boat on certain issues, there’s likely an information gap. A clearer, more thorough employee handbook and day-one orientation plan can often fill in this gap. Without updating these over time, managers shouldn’t be shocked when employees do something the managers never told them they couldn’t do.

And upon a new employee’s hire, it can be great to get them activated quickly – but only if they’re fully prepared. Take steps to ensure that your new employees are ready for the work situations likely to come up, and don’t throw them into the fire before providing adequate training. This lack of preparation often pushes good hires away who feel they were “set up to fail.” Provide the tools they’ll need, teach them about the company’s culture and history so they know who you are, and run through scenarios they could potentially see in their role early on – all before shoving them onto the floor and hoping for the best. Posters here offer employers the most advanced HR solutions and customized systems for ongoing compliance in the industry.



CHECKING IN WITH NEW HIRES

Even though most initial onboarding processes aren’t long (typically less than a week), managers shouldn’t assume that time period was enough. Managers should check in regularly with new hires...and be genuine about it. The reason is twofold: One, it helps employees see that their managers care about their staff and their development. And two, if the same questions from new employees are popping up time after time, managers can figure out what additional training and resources new hires need to educate them on the missing pieces. Sometimes figuring out how to best integrate your new hires can come straight from previous new hires: Let them tell you what they need.

Be intentional about when you have these conversations, too. If your company has high turnover at specific benchmarks of tenure (within a few weeks, at 3 months, etc.), schedule staff check-ins according to that timeline to try to close their intended escape route. This way, you can stay ahead of the curve and be able to handle new hires’ concerns before they escalate to a two-week notice (or none at all).

So much of a company’s problem with high employee turnover can be alleviated in the early stages. That’s why revamping and solidifying your onboarding processes and keeping communication open throughout the risky periods of an employee’s early days can make a huge difference in your retention efforts.

The workforce thought leaders and speakers at [Magnet Culture](#) work with thousands of business leaders to help reduce unnecessary employee turnover. Contact us at solutions@magnetculture.com to see how Magnet Culture’s programs or Workforce Retention Bootcamp could help your organization.

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THE COMMANDER'S INTENT

By Cale Guin, [Levelogics](#)

In a study by CoSchedule, over 3,000 marketers were surveyed. Only 13% said their projects were very successful. Whether you're a marketing agency, a DIYer, a marketing employee, or a business buying marketing services, that stat does not bode well for you. I cannot be sure what caused 87% of all of those marketers to give themselves such a poor assessment. I do know the most common reason marketing projects are failing when I am called in to help. The most common reason is, the marketing efforts are not aligned with what the business needs to achieve. Almost always, it is due to equal portions of miscommunication and misunderstanding.

In theory, it is easy to fix the problem. In practice, not so much. The problem starts with marketers selling services like social media, SEO, and content marketing because businesses want to buy those services. While that sounds like a marriage made in heaven, it is more of a recipe for disaster. It skips over the "why." I am not talking about a deep, philosophical, Simon Sinek "why," I am talking about the most simplistic concept of all – why are you marketing? What do you think will happen when you advertise?

I don't have to ask. I know why every business has done every marketing project they have ever done - to improve their business. If it is that obvious, why the failure rate? Because companies buy social media, for example, without understanding if social media is capable of improving their business.

HOW TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL MARKETING PROJECTS

Years ago, I came across this little gem called, The Commander's Intent. The concept of the Commander's Intent is simple and revolves around another military adage, "No plan survives contact with the enemy." Simply put, when the bullets fly, the bombs explode, and the grenades are thrown, the battle plan is shot to pieces. The Commander's Intent, however, prevails. In other words, your plans may be shot to hell, but the objective remains the same.

Your business objectives need to be as clear and strongly conveyed as the Commander's Intent when it comes to marketing. The Commander's Intent/your business goal(s) serves two purposes in marketing. First, it gets everyone involved aiming at the same thing. Secondly, it's the only real way of knowing when a project is done or successful.

It is an epic failure when marketing projects are considered "done" when websites, campaigns, or assets go live. Even ongoing services like SEO or Pay Per Click campaigns must be focused on a measurable goal, or you will have no way of knowing how successful it is or what the return is.

Believe it or not, it is difficult for companies (more accurately, the humans that run them) to define objectives in a measurable way. The solution to that problem is also easy to say yet difficult to do. Ideally, you will have a handle on where you are and what kind of improvement you expect. For example, you are receiving 50 leads per month with a conversion rate of 15%. Your marketing project could be to increase the quality of leads and set a goal of no less than 50 leads per month but increase the conversion rate to 25%.

With this kind of clarity, you can now take the value of the increase in conversions and determine an acceptable budget for that result. That will keep the marketing spending in line, causing them to be more careful when choosing the tactics or services used to achieve the result. This simplicity has more benefits, such as always being able to measure the project's health and knowing when the project is done.

I love talking about marketing projects. If you ever want to run anything by me, I will make some time to talk with you about your marketing project.

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HOW ONE NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBE TURNED OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Steve Nockerts



Thank you to our Elite Business Sponsor, Consolidated Construction for this article.

The Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota is one of the most beautiful in the nation, featuring lush greenery, abundant wildlife, and pristine glacial lakes drained by the Big Sioux River.

The reservation is home to the Sisseton-Wahpeton-Oyate (SWO) tribe, a band of the Santee Sioux who were relocated to the area from Minnesota after the infamous Dakota Uprising of 1862. The tribe paid a heavy price for their role in the conflict, as 38 members were hung by a military tribunal for their actions, while another 264 were sent to the stockades. President Lincoln commuted their sentences when tribal leaders agreed to be relocated to the reservation.

This period of suppression and internment left an indelible imprint on the tribe and helped create an enduring culture of perseverance among the SWO. Today, this mindset is driving tribal leaders to take decisive action to protect the health and well-being of their members during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, simultaneously setting the stage for the tribe's long-term economic success.

COVID-19 COMES TO THE PLAINS

While the COVID-19 outbreak reshaped the lives of every American, indigenous peoples have been more negatively impacted than any other ethnic or racial group. Tribal members make up only 9 percent of South Dakota's population, yet they represent 14 percent of all COVID-19 cases and 15 percent of all deaths, according to data from the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. For many SWO members, the situation is compounded due to underlying health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, asthma, obesity, and substance and alcohol abuse. Stay-at-home orders have exacerbated these issues, both physically and psychologically. Many of the 15,000 SWO members reside in multi-generational housing, making it difficult to insulate older members from exposure. If even a few people are struggling, the impact is multiplied exponentially due to this extended family social structure.

APPROACHING THE CHALLENGE FROM A 7TH GENERATION PERSPECTIVE

As tribal leaders sought to assist their members in the battle, they also took an honest look at how the SWO had evolved from an economic perspective. The reality is, they had no choice: the pandemic forced the temporary closure of three casinos on the reservation, shuttering the largest employers of tribal members. Suddenly, their most critical revenue stream had gone dry, and everyone in the community was impacted on some level.

Historically, the SWO had been self-motivated proponents of building and development on the reservation. The advent of casino gaming changed that. A flood of members moved from performing skilled labor to working in the casino industry, where the jobs are easier and safer than building trade professions. This is true not only physically but also from the standpoint of offering consistent, year-round employment.

By its own admission, the tribe had become passive at developing skilled workers, pursuing infrastructure projects, identifying funding sources, and encouraging new businesses to locate in the area. This solemn realization helped reset the thinking of tribal leadership, guiding them back to the sacred spiritual vision referred to as the Seventh Generation Perspective: the belief that every decision should be made with the long-term benefit of future generations in mind. That meant recognizing the importance of what construction means to the economic fortunes of the tribe: jobs, training, self-esteem, and confidence.

Recognizing the need to invest in the physical and mental health of their members, the SWO Tribal Council decided to take the fight to COVID-19 by constructing a housing project for those suffering the effects of the virus. As the situation grew more dire, that plan morphed into a more comprehensive 16-unit COVID-19 quarantine and isolation facility.

The tribe applied for, and received, aid from the federal government through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and



Economic Security Act, commonly known as CARES. The bill, enacted in March 2020, made a pool of money available to state, local, and tribal governments seeking to mitigate the impact of the outbreak.

There was, however, one caveat: all related construction expenses had to be incurred by December 30, 2020 to be eligible for CARES reimbursement. That made speed-to-completion of utmost concern. SWO Economic Development and Planning Director Matt Thompson knew that posed a challenge for the tribe.

“We didn’t know how to take the first step. It’s tough when there’s no process to follow,” noted Thompson. “As a whole, we lack technical expertise. We do things in a very old-school way. We had to find a trustworthy construction partner, one that could fill in the gaps and turn our vision into reality.” But where to look?

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM SOME FRIENDS — NEW AND OLD

Enter the team of Consolidated Construction Company (based in Appleton, Wisconsin and with offices located in the Dakotas) and HKG Architects (based in Aberdeen, South Dakota). HKG had a long-standing relationship with SWO, while Consolidated Construction had experience working on tribal projects in the region. The team heard about the challenges SWO faced and reached out to lend their expertise.

After discussions with the tribe, Consolidated Construction and HKG crafted a manageable development strategy by splitting the project into multiple phases. Consolidated Construction also proposed a partnership to not only assist with building the COVID-19 facility but also put in place teaching and training opportunities for SWO members interested in pursuing careers in the construction industry.

“Our collaborative goal is to empower the members in their own personal and tribal success stories,” said Jim Perras, the principal in charge of the Consolidated Construction team. “We worked directly with their Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) to put a process in place to provide training and get members exposure to potential careers in the construction industry.”

“What really set Consolidated Construction apart is they took a genuine interest in helping us improve the health of our community,” said Thompson. “From an execution standpoint, they provide an entire suite of services that reduce a lot of the risk for the tribe. We don’t have a construction outfit. We also don’t have the capacity to pre-develop plans or do architecture. Consolidated brought the whole package, and their teaming up with HKG Architects clicked right from the start.”

SPEED TO MARKET

The CARES Act requirement that all project-related expenses be incurred by December 30 instantly created a timeline

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crunch. Under normal circumstances, Phase 1 of the SWO COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Facility should take approximately nine months to build. The project got the go-ahead to start in August. A nine-month construction schedule would see the project completed in May 2021, long after the CARES money expired. A flurry of creative solutions needed to be implemented to wrap things up by year end. Easier said than done.

Due to COVID-19, the construction industry has suffered extreme manpower and material shortages, both of which negatively impact production and supply chain efficiencies.

In addition, construction firms have had to implement extensive protocols to manage COVID-19 exposure on job sites to ensure the safety of employees, subcontractors, and visitors. This has added time and cost.

Consolidated Construction and HKG Architects were able to fast-track the project schedule by sequencing design to support the construction process. HKG worked at length to issue early sets of plans for the site development, foundations, and framing. This allowed Consolidated Construction to begin building while interior finishes were still being selected. The team also collaborated on material selections, ensuring appropriate and cost-effective materials could be obtained on time to meet the accelerated construction schedule. Once the basic layout of the building was approved, Consolidated Construction reached out to subcontractors working on the project for design input and efficiencies in order to meet schedule. The SWO did an outstanding job of making timely decisions, allowing construction to continue. Their TERO office also came through with manpower and skilled labor training to offset the lack of subcontractor availability in some trades.

Phase 1 was completed on time and on budget — before the December 30 CARES Act deadline. It includes a 16-bed quarantine and isolation facility with 17,000 square feet of space for testing, a commercial kitchen, offices, commons, a nurse's station, and living units complete with full kitchens, living areas, bathrooms, laundry facilities, and bedrooms for patients.

For Phase 2, a second wing is being added with 22 micro apartment rooms. Initially, it will be used to house short-term COVID-19 patients. Once the virus is under control, it will evolve to a behavioral health treatment and housing facility focusing on drug and alcohol addiction and abuse treatment. That program will be administered by Dakota

Pride, a tribal-run organization that hopes to implement a 9–12 month recovery program for methamphetamine addiction.

There are also plans for a third phase that will incorporate behavioral health day treatment and educational classrooms.

JUST GETTING STARTED

As the quarantine facility project was getting started, SWO decided to use CARES funds to do additional construction projects for the benefit of the community. An early childhood care facility and food pantry were added to the to-do list. Both would fill gaping needs created by the COVID-19 crisis.

As Thompson observed, "COVID-19 affects the food, the children, the health and well-being of all our people. That's why we initially sought out proactive solutions for quarantine and isolation — to slow the spread of the virus. It's why we chose to pursue an early childhood learning center and food pantry facilities — to educate our young people and get food into the hands and mouths of those who need it most."

The tribe's present daycare can only hold 20 — far short of the needs of the community. The addition and expansion will allow caregivers to handle up to 100 children daily, giving more residents the opportunity to work during the day while giving them peace of mind knowing their children are safe and well cared for. The early childhood facility will feature state-of-the-art air filtering and decontamination processes for the safety of children, caregivers, and parents alike.

The food pantry, which previously resided in an abandoned post office building, has been enlarged and renovated to meet the increased demand for food brought on by the COVID-19 situation. The drop off and pickup processes have been reconfigured to ensure the safe and sanitary handling of food items at all times.

All of these projects are running concurrently, with the food pantry set to open in January 2021 and the daycare in the spring. The magnitude of these accomplishments was not lost on SWO tribal leaders.

"It's unbelievable what Consolidated Construction has been able to accomplish," said Jesse Larson, an SWO specialist who coordinates activities between the tribe, project manager, architect, and construction firm. He is

also the chairman of one of the seven SWO districts on the reservation. "Our leadership took the bold step to get the funding to improve our living conditions. Thanks to HKG Architects and the quick actions of Consolidated Construction and their crews, we will be able to accomplish and complete all these projects in 6-9 months. Incredible!"

ACTING TODAY WITH AN EYE TOWARD THE FUTURE

The SWO approach investing in the health and well-being of their members as part of a long-term, sustainable nation-building and business-building strategy. But they're not just focused on their own people. They hope to take the knowledge gained through this journey and help other tribes focus on innovation, growth, and resiliency.

"I feel good going forward," said Thompson, "because these projects have spiritually impacted our people, so much so that we now have a road map — a vision for the future."

It's also awakened a long-dormant spirit within the SWO.

According to Larson, "Through these projects, we found our heart and imagination and confidence. We shook off complacency. Now we're looking for new partnerships and new revenue streams."

"We are resilient," added Thompson. "This experience is helping us get smarter, faster, better prepared so future projects can be more seamless and efficient. And we are just getting started."

"I like to use the acronym ESG: Environment, Social, and Governance," said Thompson. "We want to be accountable stewards of nature. We want to properly manage our relationships with employees, suppliers, customers, and the communities where we operate. And we want to make sure we are looking out for the health and well-being of our tribal members. These are our guiding principles as we move forward."

WALA'S 2021 FALL CONFERENCE



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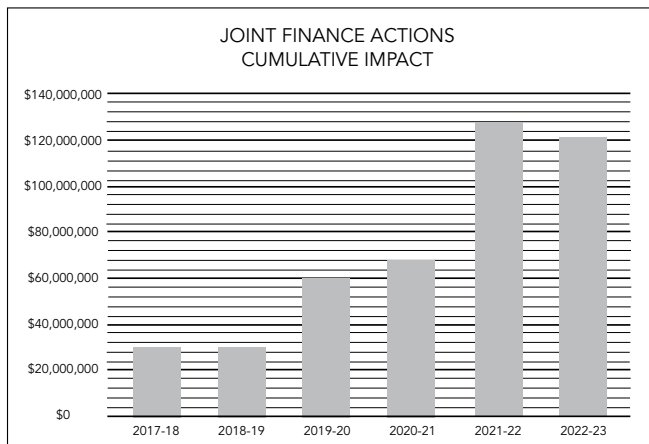
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ADVOCACY UPDATES

WALA ADVOCACY EFFORTS SEE BENEFITS FOR ASSISTED LIVING

The 2021-2023 biennial budget was finalized and signed into law on July 8, 2021. Included in the 2-year state budget was a \$104.2 million increase in the Family Care Direct Care Workforce Funding initiative, which equates to a nearly 85% increase - all funds over the biennium. And, while the Legislature removed from the budget the proposal to develop a statewide minimum rate band for home and community-based long-term care supports, the expectation is the Department of Health Services (DHS) will soon begin work developing this methodology. The development process could take over a year and once completed would still need approval by the Legislature, possibly in the 2023-2025 budget process.



The reason WALA and others were able to obtain new and increased funding is due in large part to maintaining the principle that “all politics is local.” Meaning you along with other assisted living providers took the time to educate your local state legislators – showing them the reality of the assisted living profession and the very real problems in Family Care.

But, as mentioned previously – our work is not done. It’s clear that the Wisconsin Family Care program is broken and needs repair – at the least a basic acknowledgement of the business markets – the actual costs of labor, product prices – and inflation. Unfortunately, to many Family Care seems less about managing care and more about managing costs – stagnant provider reimbursement rates and all-too-often notices of impending rate cuts.



WHEN YOUR STATE LEGISLATOR(S) & GOVERNOR DOES SOMETHING RIGHT – BE SURE TO SAY THANK YOU!

When efforts to pass a law or obtain new/increased funding are successful – each one of us needs to take a few minutes and send a note to say thank you. Elected officials rarely receive positive feedback – more often only complaints... never ending complaints. Effective relationships require effective communication on the positives & negatives. The Legislature and Governor provided a significant increased investment in the Family Care Direct Care Workforce Funding initiative – so please email, call or write to them – tell them why this is important to you and your facility. Who are my legislators? Go to: maps.legis.wisconsin.gov

WALA PAC – SUPPORT ELECTED OFFICIALS THAT SUPPORT ASSISTED LIVING – DONATE TODAY!!

Assisted Living providers... Success does not just happen – it takes years of relationship building and supporting candidates that understand our issues. The next election cycle will determine the offices of Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, 17 of the 33 State Senate districts and all 99 Assembly Representatives. We need Assisted Living providers to donate to the WALA-PAC to ensure Assisted Living continues to have a strong voice at the State Capitol. If you are interested in donating to the WALA-PAC, you can contact WALA at info@ewala.org or (608) 288-0246.

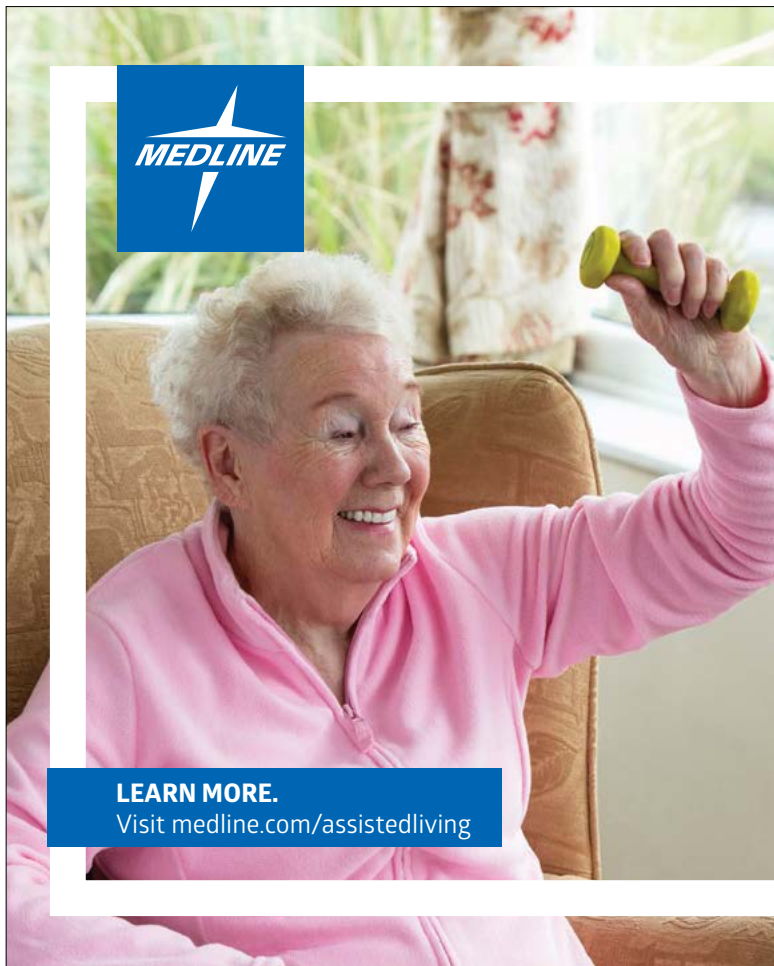
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IT'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME FOR ACCREDITATION! YES, REALLY!

We've said it so much that it might already feel like a cliché, but this last year and a half has been like no other. Our industry has faced challenges that we could not have imagined, and every single thing we thought we could count on has been upended seemingly overnight.

So why in the world would now be a good time to start the accreditation process? Because, quite simply, nothing is as hard as what you've already done and continue to do! During a time when there were no answers, very little (and often-changing) information, and barriers that rose up before you in every direction, – YOU made things happen. You had the courage and the wisdom to continue to provide the best possible care for your residents, their loved ones, your employees, and communities. You were able to take swift and decisive action and pivot your operations to keep things running as smoothly as possible during a time unlike any other.

Rest assured — you know what it takes to provide high-quality care and services in your assisted living community. You have probably even worked through the Quality Loop more times in the past year than you can count. Things have been hard lately, but you deserve to be recognized for all the tough work you've done and everything you've accomplished.

Many providers worry that they are “not ready” for accreditation or that they haven't accomplished every goal they've set for themselves. In reality, most providers don't give themselves enough credit for all the amazing work they have done. Applying for accreditation does not mean you're perfect or you haven't had some stumbles along the



DIAMOND ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

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way. It does mean that you have the systems and support to weather the storm. It means that you recognize that quality isn't a destination but part of a bigger journey. Sometimes it's hard to find silver linings amid all this chaos, but the resilience and creativity that providers like you have shown during the COVID-19 pandemic really highlights how our industry can shine.

We've learned the tough lesson that nothing is promised to us. The only thing we know for sure is that there will always be something unknown around the corner; there will always be another challenge on the horizon. Hard things will always happen, but we will always find a way through.

You — yes, you! – have what it takes to start the accreditation process. WALA is here to help you every step of the way, and we are invested in your success. There will never be a better time to start!

Do you want to learn more about the process? Let's review your accreditation readiness together! [Contact WALA](#) to get started.

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ECP ADDRESSING CORONAVIRUS

With a built-in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, [ECP's symptoms and infections tracking features](#) give senior living communities the data and tools to slow the spread of infections, including COVID-19.

Symptom tracking automation allows communities to automate regular checking of symptoms such as fever, coughing, or shortness of breath. This allows communities to monitor residents throughout the day to make sure that infections are caught earlier and isolation can begin before infections spread.

Infection tracking helps communities collect infection data in real time, making it easier to comply with regulations, notify residents and family members, and manage infections during a pandemic, other outbreaks, and cold and flu season.

Better collection of symptoms and infection data also makes it possible for communities to analyze outbreaks after they happen using ECP's new infection and symptom reporting tools. These tools help communities learn from past experiences and improve policies and procedures going forward.

SOLVING CORONAVIRUS-RELATED CHALLENGE

By providing automated tracking and reporting into an existing caregiver workflow, these tools make it easier to collect data and actively encourage collection. For example, while a logbook of residents' temperatures may in theory allow for the collection of symptom data, it can be cumbersome and easy to forget.

METRICS

In the 14 months since these new features were released, more than 20,000 symptoms and infections have been tracked in 1,000+ senior living communities across the country.

"We're excited to offer symptom and infection tracking tools to help assisted living communities stay on top of COVID-19 through improved documentation, communication, and reporting. By being proactive, ALFs can decrease the spread of infection in their communities," said Carly Smith, Lead Product Manager at ECP.

LESSONS LEARNED

ECP has helped communities across the US track infections and symptoms to prevent or minimize outbreaks within their communities. Many communities are also using ECP's symptom and infection tracking tools to track and report on outbreaks of influenza and other endemic contagious diseases.

From a regulatory perspective, we are already seeing states increase their infection and symptom tracking and reporting requirements. ECP's new features will help communities comply with these and future federal, state, and local regulations.

Over time, we expect that symptom and infection tracking and data sharing will change processes and culture, too. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a great deal of fear and uncertainty gripping the senior living industry — where were outbreaks and what were their consequences? Having tools like ECP in place will give both communities and public health officials an answer to these questions, changing the culture around pandemics and other outbreaks from one of fear and uncertainty to one of confidence and data-driven analysis.

From a process perspective, when symptoms are detected, residents are immediately isolated, and symptom-tracking can be stepped up for residents and caregivers who have had contact with the infected individual. After outbreaks, communities are holding after-the-fact learning sessions, digging into data to see what can be done differently in the future.

ABOUT ECP

ECP is a complete software solution that offers an [EHR](#), eMAR, and clinical charting system for senior living communities. ECP is used for tracking all clinical activities throughout a senior living community, beginning with assessments that generate care plans all the way to tracking individual cares, med passes, and observations. In addition, ECP supports communities with state-specific compliance requirements. ECP's eMAR also interfaces with hundreds of [pharmacies](#) nationwide, allowing for the electronic monitoring of med passing. ECP is here to help you improve clinical outcomes, business performance, and compliance through data and clinical automation.

More information available at ecp123.com or by calling 262-684-2502

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