

WALA ADVOCATE

WISCONSIN ASSISTED LIVING ASSOCIATION • WINTER 2021 VOL. 26 • NO. 3



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Pam Preston, WALA Board President



As we approach the end of 2021, I'd like to recognize the incredible WALA team who has provided such value and support for our members. We know that being a provider is very challenging in these times amidst the caregiver crisis and a pandemic, just to name two key issues. The WALA team has worked assiduously to ensure that you have all the tools and resources to effectively navigate these issues and provide the best care for your residents.

As you look at our new logo, you will see the "W" has three bars to demonstrate our commitment to three deliverables — advocacy, education, and service. WALA is the voice for assisted living, and Mike and his team have worked closely on legislative efforts and with the Bureau of Assisted Living to ensure that your voice is heard. In addition to the wonderful work that Mike and Forbes do in this regard, we have also very much appreciated your legislative outreach. Whether you wrote to your representatives, participated in Advocacy Day, or invited your legislator to visit your community, this is important work that makes a real difference.

What a wonderful year for education! After being virtual in 2020, it was powerful to be together again for our 2021 Fall Conference at the Ingleside. With outstanding speakers presenting on a variety of fresh topics and the ability to connect with each other and our exhibitors, it was an incredible experience. Thank you again to all our

speakers, exhibitors, committee members, WALA staff, and participants who made it such a success! In addition to the fall conference, the WALA team has continued to provide administrator courses that are engaging and impactful throughout the year in addition to webinars on a variety of topics. Please feel free to let us know what topics would be helpful to you; we always appreciate your feedback and ideas.

In terms of service, WALA has worked closely with our members and key stakeholders to ensure that you have the resources, information, and tools to provide the best service to your residents. Mike and team are responsive and always happy to help and support you. They are great resources for information and are masterful researchers and connectors, so when you need support, please feel free to reach out to them.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to assisted living, and thank you to our strong and talented WALA team—Mike, Todd, Erin, Heather, and Kayla!

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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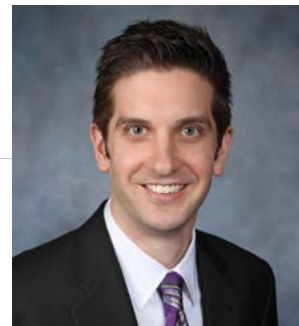
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CEO CORNER

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 deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and a 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.

As we look back on 2021, we have been happy to report a number of advocacy successes:

- Passage of reasonable liability protections for COVID-19 related injuries or deaths
- Continuation and increased funding (\$104m all funds) into the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative
- \$54.1 million 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 (room and board) services.
- Enhancements to the Family Care program, such as the future implementation of a rate band/rate setting process and a 5% rate increase, effective January 1, 2022
- Closely working with Argentum to help secure COVID-19 relief funding
- Active representation of assisted living providers on resources related to COVID-19 — vaccines, regulatory guidance, testing supplies, personal protective equipment, etc.
- Continuous meetings 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)
- WALA representation on numerous legislative, regulatory, and executive task forces, including Governor Evers Task Force on Caregiving

Looking ahead to next year, we will continue to advocate on your behalf.

One of the ways you can help is through the WALA PAC. The WALA PAC 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. A more robust WALA PAC will support these efforts. You can provide a personal contribution (corporate contributions are not allowed) at ewala.org/advocacy.

In addition, the 2022 membership renewal process is underway. Your WALA membership includes access to great benefits such as legal resources, insurance offerings, a job board, and membership discounts. We hope you will continue your membership in 2022. You can find out more at ewala.org.

We are also looking forward to a number of great events next year, including an in-person Spring Conference on March 22–24, 2022 at the Kalahari Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. Very soon you will be receiving the agenda, which will outline the great sessions and networking opportunities we have lined up. We hope you will be able to join us.

I hope you and your families have a wonderful holiday season. 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.

VACCINATION CONSTERNATION

Let's start with what we know:

1. OSHA issued Emergency temporary Standards ("ETS") in June 2021 for most healthcare provider types, including assisted living facilities regardless of size, requiring the development and implementation of a plan to combat COVID-19 ("COVID-19 plan"), including how a facility will address COVID-19 vaccination.
2. CMS issued emergency regulations in November 2021 for Medicare- and Medicaid-certified facilities requiring staff vaccination against COVID-19, but Wisconsin assisted living facilities are neither Medicare- nor Medicaid-certified nor federally regulated. Therefore, the CMS regulation does not apply to Wisconsin assisted living facilities.
3. OSHA issued an additional ETS in November 2021 mandating all employers (healthcare and non-healthcare) with 100 or more employees to vaccinate their employees against COVID-19 or to regularly test their employees for COVID-19. However, employers with 100 or more employees in compliance with the June OSHA ETS (the COVID-19 plan drafted and implemented) would not be required to comply with the November ETS vaccination mandate.
4. On November 10, 2021, ten states filed suit to enjoin the CMS vaccination mandate.
5. On November 12, 2021, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit issued an order staying or halting enforcement of the OSHA November 2021 ETS vaccination mandate, effectively nullifying it for the present time.

Armed with these facts, where do we go from here?

First, continue to follow the COVID-19 plan you developed as part of the June 2021 OSHA ETS. If you haven't yet prepared an OSHA COVID-19 plan for your facility, do so immediately or ask us how we can help you with that. Having an OSHA COVID-19 plan up and running exempts you from having to comply with the November OSHA ETS on mandatory vaccination. Second, continue all your COVID-19 prevention efforts. Third, urge your staff to get vaccinated. Given the current staffing crisis, this is becoming a more and more difficult position to take; average vaccination rates among staff are about 50% in many instances. Fourth, even if you aren't requiring the COVID-19 vaccination for staff, continue to require face coverings. As of this writing, COVID-19 is again on the rise. Face coverings are the minimum you can do to protect your residents. Face coverings are fast becoming a standard of care for reducing the risk of facility COVID-19 outbreaks. Think you can beat that rap if your facility is maskless and COVID-19 sneaks in, causing an outbreak? Think again. If the regulators don't hammer you hard enough, the plaintiffs' attorneys surely will.

I heard this today: we expect and require police to put themselves in harm's way to protect the general public; we expect and require firemen to put themselves in harm's way to protect the general public and our property; is it really a stretch to expect and require healthcare workers to get vaccinated to protect the health of our most vulnerable citizens?

SUBTLE CHANGES, SIGNIFICANT REWARDS

Pete Smith, Dare to Matter

Some of the most productive, engaged, and profitable companies today don't focus solely on employee happiness. Rather, they tap into a desire that every great employee possesses: ownership. And the way to elevate personal ownership is to develop a culture of CHOICE.

Our choices are the only things we control. Nothing more. Nothing less. A significance-based mindset recognizes that in every moment of every day, in every situation, we always have a choice. What we don't always like are the options we get to choose from or the outcomes of our decisions.

All too often, individuals, teams, and organizations spend their time lamenting the difficulty of the situations they face. When none of their options are convenient, easy, or even desirable, it becomes easy to say they have no choice. When the outcomes of their decisions are not exactly what they had hoped or planned, it becomes easy to say they had no choice.

When one or both of these situations present themselves, the temptation arises to begin making excuses about their actions or to place blame on someone or something else as to why they "had to" make the decisions they made. At times, people may even rationalize their decisions so they will make sense to the individuals they are speaking to.

Of course, no excuse, blame, rationalization actually matters. They rarely change anyone's current position. What matters is the simple acceptance that a choice was made in light of the options, an outcome was produced, and the next steps can now be considered.

We can want or prefer that things were different. We can be subjective in our thoughts and feelings about our options and the outcomes of our choices. However, we must also remain objective regarding the reality that we always have a choice.

When a culture of choice is developed, employees at every level understand that responsibility and fault, though often merged as one, can be mutually exclusive. All too often when a mistake is made, managers gather their teams and



ask the question, "Who's responsible for this mess?" Not surprisingly, rarely does a hand go up, and more rarely do multiple hands rise.

Imagine that same scenario with a different outcome. What if every team member's hand raised in response to that manager's question? This isn't glorified peer pressure or the result of a pre-arranged team meeting in which everyone agreed to collective martyrdom. Instead, it's possible when a significance-based team understands that you can still be responsible for something without being at fault.

You can be 100 percent responsible in a situation even when it's 100 percent not your fault.

One way to begin creating a culture of choice is to eliminate the phrase "I didn't have a choice" from your conversations. That phrase creates a mindset that life is being done to us, that we're innocent bystanders on the highway of life, or, worst of all, that we're victims of circumstance.

Instead, start talking about what you chose to do. Talk about what you choose to do. Talk about what you will do. Certainly the past provides us the opportunity to learn from our mistakes — to assess the actions that led to the present conditions and adjust present and future behavior accordingly. But lamenting the difficulty of the present situation and our possible disdain of the options doesn't move a person, or a team, or a company forward. It keeps them stuck and struggling, and they become more inclined to talk about how bad things are instead of focusing on

what needs to happen next to enable them to achieve the goals they set out to attain. This keeps them focused on the past, not the present.

Individuals and teams produce at higher levels when they're focused on the next steps toward achieving their goals rather than blaming others or justifying why they're going to fall short.

No company desires unhappy employees, but a significance-based company understands that unhappiness is a by-product of a mentality that is defeatist and unaccountable and lacks ownership.

Empower people by helping them recognize they always have a choice. Your bottom line will thank you for it.



Join Pete Smith, author of *Dare to Matter*, as he delivers the keynote address at WALA's 2022 Spring Conference on March 22-24. In 2020, very few industries were rocked as much as the long-term care industry. To thrive in this new environment, assisted living professionals must commit themselves to staying focused on the things that matter most. How we matter may have changed. That we matter has not. Pete's keynote will directly address the question "Where do I go from here?" Visit ewala.org to learn more or register today!

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TOO FEW COOKS IN THE KITCHEN: 5 TIPS FOR MANAGING LABOR SHORTAGES IN SENIOR LIVING

Martin Bros. Distributing

We've all heard the phrase "too many cooks in the kitchen." However, recently there have been "not enough cooks in the kitchen" throughout the food service industry. Staff shortages are widespread. This creates large challenges for senior living communities, who rely on kitchen staff to carry out their daily menus for residents. For seniors, food is not just essential to their health; it is often the most pleasurable part of their day — from the act of eating to the socialization that takes place in the dining hall.

How can you continue to provide this essential and pleasurable experience for senior living residents while faced with a limited number of staff? Here are five tips for adapting your menu to manage staffing shortages:

1. Simplify your menu. If second choices are offered for your residents at mealtime, consider adjusting these to be easy-to-prepare items (such as soup/sandwich, fully cooked beef patties, or fully cooked chicken breasts).

2. Incorporate convenient heat-and-serve items or prepare and freeze items ahead of time. Convenient items for reheating include lasagna and casseroles.

3. Incorporate items and recipes that can be offered or easily adapted for texture-modified diets. Using items that work well for more than one diet type saves time since you don't have to prepare different offerings for each diet. Items that work well for different diet types include sloppy joes/maid rites, meat salad sandwiches, cooked vegetables, and canned fruit.

4. Plan menus to include speed scratch recipes that are easy to prepare. Focus on a few key ingredients that allow flexibility (such as cake mixes) and can be used for cakes, coffee cakes, and cobblers or sauce mixes that can be easily prepared and adapted for different tastes.

5. Shorten your menu cycle. It may be necessary to cut back to a one- to two-week menu cycle to manage inventory and focus on items that can be easily prepared.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDICATION MANAGEMENT SAFETY AND LIABILITY

Medication administration plays a significant role in resident care, as accurate records help ensure resident safety. Though precise record keeping can be done through various mediums, manual paper charting is troublesome and is becoming a thing of the past. As technology evolves and improves, it continues to enhance electronic medication management and overall resident care. The use of eMAR programs has shown a significant reduction in medication errors by incorporating industry standards, keeping staff task-oriented, and offering transparency of information for staff, providers, and all other parties involved.

How Technology can Improve Medication Records

Over the last several years, assisted living providers have experienced a significant increase in liability cases, many of which relate to medication record paper documentation, resulting in high liability insurance premiums. These errors are incredibly dangerous to residents' health and are one of the most expensive lawsuits a provider can face. To provide quality resident care and reduce a community's risk, it's crucial to incorporate systems that focus on accurate medication administration and compliance.

Decreasing Medication Errors / Workflow Efficiency

Many eMAR programs include instant notifications to remind staff of the upcoming med pass schedule and make sure medications are given in the appropriate time frame. eMARs often offer alerts for missed items to reduce missed charting. In addition, some programs also incorporate required prompts, such as vitals or compliance-related questions, at the time of med administration to ensure all medications are being handled properly. With this automation, communities experience a significant decrease in medication errors while increasing overall workflow efficiency.

eMAR programs allow for a clear, simplistic way of viewing medication details electronically, rather than sifting through stacks of paper records, such as medication and treatment binders. An electronic medication administration record (eMAR) can easily be reviewed and evaluated in a single space, reducing the chance of misplaced documents. Electronic records can be accessed remotely, allowing a pharmacist, nurse, supervisor, or consultant the ability to review and gather accurate reports and complete audits. Proper user permissions grant staff access only to areas required for their role, which provides the safety and security needed for regulatory compliance.

Effective Communication

As the usage of medications continues to increase, medication orders frequently change to improve the outcome and effectiveness of each order. Multiple healthcare providers often prescribe these medications. A pharmacy-integrated eMAR ensures direct communication of new, changed, or discontinued medications in real-time, keeping everyone informed and up to date. These medication updates, such as directions, dosage, frequency, and diagnoses, are displayed for staff to easily verify during medication administration. This creates a concise, transparent schedule of tasks to keep staff on track.

ECP eMAR

Using a quality eMAR that incorporates industry standards is an excellent way to increase medication administration safety. ECP provides an industry-leading eMAR for Assisted Living and Long-Term Care communities that has been implemented in all fifty states and internationally. ECP eMAR replaces outdated paper systems, improving medication oversight and overall efficiency. The easy-to-use software offers increased automation with vital prompts, additional care questions, and scheduled follow-ups. Its clean, simple layout makes it easy to identify essential resident and medication details to help provide the best quality care. ECP helps reduce medication errors with safer med passing and enhanced oversight.

To learn more about ECP's eMAR and receive a live demonstration of the program, please reach out to the sales team at (262) 684-2502 or sales@ecp123.com.





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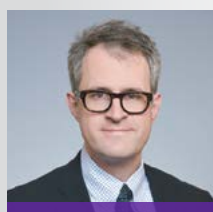
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STRATEGIES TO REDUCE LABOR NEEDS AND KEEP UP WITH DEMAND IN HEALTHCARE

Marleah Keuler Grahek, Kelsey Stacks, Taylor Goodland, M3 Insurance

While many industries have just started to feel the workforce shortage in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this issue is nothing new to healthcare providers. The shortage was a significant challenge pre-pandemic, but COVID-19 has escalated the situation into a full-blown crisis.

Data from the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center, and Population Projections depicts that, in Wisconsin, "it is projected between 2015 and 2040, the population ages 65 and older will grow by 640,000 people — an increase of 72%. That rate is six times higher than the overall Wisconsin population growth projection of 12% for the same period." Bottom line — the demand for healthcare services will increase, but the supply of workforce is decreasing.

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE LABOR FOR A DECREASING HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

There are not enough people to fill open positions, so providers need to think differently to chip away at the crisis. While there are plenty of conversations surrounding recruitment and retention, we recommend providers start conversations on how to work with the full-time equivalents (FTEs) you do have while looking for ways to reduce your need in the future. We argue this can best be solved in a three-tier approach: (1) leverage technology, (2) outsource, and (3) examine workflow efficiencies (Lean Process).

Technology

Investing in technology can be a fruitful way to reduce your labor in healthcare settings. Technology can automate low-level and administrative tasks so providers can focus on areas that matter: strategic initiatives, quality care to clients, and positive workplace culture for staff. We have outlined numerous example solutions in three categories below: clinical, administrative, and service.

Clinical Example Solutions

- Infection Control Entrance Screening
- Wound Care Software
- Vaccine Management
- Mechanical Lifts — Requiring One Caregiver
- Advanced Call Light Systems
- Wearable Tech for Patient Monitoring
- Predictive Artificial Intelligence Models in Clinical Decision Making
- Documentation Scrubbing Software
- Smart Toilets

Service Example Solutions

- Robots
 - Meals, Medication, Linens, Garbage Removal, Admission Intake, 1:1 Social Interaction
- Ultra-Violet Cleaning Robots
- Robotic Central Supply Inventory Management
- Application-Based Electronic Menus
- Entrance Screening

Administrative Example Solutions

- Cloud-Based Email and Collaboration Platforms
- Workforce Management Enterprise Systems
- Recruiting Solutions
- Billing Solutions
- On-Demand Staffing Solutions
- Time and Attendance Platforms
- Staff Training Solutions

OUTSOURCE

We know many providers pride themselves on having entirely internal staff and processes. However, more often than not, outsourcing saves money and alleviates provider burden between administrative tasks and personnel concerns. Food for thought: If your organization has not considered outsourcing, why not and what are your barriers?

IDEAS FOR OUTSOURCING

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

FMLA is complicated and time consuming, and it is often challenging to stay in compliance. FMLA administration typically falls under HR, where professionals are tasked with being experts in payroll, talent acquisition, and retention while also handling conflict within the workplace. Because of this, HR develops strong personal connection with staff, which can create a difficult environment when making decisions on whether or not an employee's situation qualifies for FMLA. Often exceptions are made and there are discrepancies in employee records. Sometimes employees even learn to abuse the FMLA policy, which can impact a provider's culture.

When an organization outsources FMLA administration, an outsourced vendor takes the responsibility of determining qualification and managing paperwork and recordkeeping associated with FMLA decisions. In addition, these vendors assist with and track intermittent leave. When employees are eligible for FMLA, they contact the outsourced vendor instead of the internal HR department.



Unemployment Claims Management and Administration

Third-party companies can offer the expertise and knowledge of state regulations to better support your organization through the bureaucratic unemployment system while optimizing cost control. Service offerings may include administration of unemployment claims management (including proprietary systems to manage and track unemployment claims and appeals in real-time), appeal hearings representation, and actuarial forecasting of unemployment benefit claims, among others.

Enrollment Solutions

Open enrollment is a busy time of year for organizations and their HR teams. Rather than having internal teams spend time with small groups or individual employees, there are options for one-on-one open enrollment counselors to work with your employees for little to no cost.

WORKFLOW EFFICIENCIES AND THE LABOR POOL

Workflow Efficiencies — Utilize Lean to Cut the Fat

When was the last time your organization reviewed your processes? Have you asked, “Are we doing this because it has value or because we’ve always done it this way?”

Consider putting together a work group of direct care staff and leaders to identify potentially wasteful or duplicative tasks.

Countless providers still use typical eight- to twelve-hour schedules. Consider discussing with your staff the busiest

times, during which it would be beneficial to have two-, four-, or six-hour coverage. Other options may include weekend warrior positions or offering a three- to four-day work week.

Labor Pool

The labor pool is shrinking. We encourage providers to evaluate whether they have expanded their labor pool to the extent possible. Example options include:

- Uncertified Positions (Hospitality Aides)
- Cross Train: Emergency Nurse Aide Training Program
- Family Caregiver Program (Assisted Living)
- Individuals with Disabilities
- International Workers
- Students and Other Youth Apprenticeship Programs
- Volunteers Beyond Activity Programming: Reception Duties, Dining, or Administrative Functions

Key Takeaways

- Understand the labor shortage is not going away.
- View technology not as an expense but as an investment in long-term labor solutions.
- Identify outsourcing opportunities to reduce staff burden and scheduling challenges.
- Implement changes to “normal” practices to accommodate expectations of today’s workforce.

WHAT DOES TAKING RESPONSIBILITY REALLY MEAN

When it comes to approaching leadership, taking responsibility is a common theme emphasized in training, onboarding, and employee handbooks alike. But it actually can be a confusing topic when it means something different to everyone.

Responsibility lives on a continuum, and in a largely digital world often separated by screens and physical distance, ownership for duties has never been more murky. Unfortunately, this scenario often leads to drama...which we sometimes refer to as the tragic expression of an unmet need. Drama is a productivity killer and removes both creativity and passion from the equation.

We believe in the power and freedom in drama free teams. When responsibility is murky, a drama triangle emerges where there is always a victim and a victor.

Often the confusion surrounding responsibility actually appears because a higher level leader habitually solves the problems of their team members. They answer every question and provide solutions for every conundrum. This creates a passive environment where lower-level staffers never learn to think, act and problem-solve on their own. So the questions keep on coming and the responsibility for their actions dwindles to near nothing.

Does this sound familiar to you?

It is incredibly common for leaders to struggle with wanting things to be done correctly versus allowing their team members to learn and grow so they can achieve the 'correct' results autonomously. The fact is, there are small failures along the way on the journey to responsibility. But when people see they have choices and options other than the 'one right answer,' they take that ownership that becomes responsibility.

As a result, they are more fulfilled in their work. They no longer consider themselves a victim in that drama triangle because they are owning responsibility for their actions and the choices they made to get there. Even more importantly, their leader is able to do the work they were meant to do as well since they are no longer managing every decision for their team members.

So, how do we change?

Like many leaders, you are probably wondering how you possibly begin to make such a massive change in the way you relate to your team. Your first assignment is to internalize these beliefs before you teach them. Once you commit to being the kind of leader who will truly help their team grow, the next steps will fall into place.

The new kind of leader you will approach leadership with a heart of service. The quickest way to win someone's heart is to serve them. It shows them that you're in it for their best interest, not just for what you can get from them. Leaders serve their teams by helping them be successful and giving them credit. You serve by helping them with their own goals, passions, and struggles. This kind of service can best be achieved by truly listening to what those goals, passions, and struggles really are.

Begin by setting up a one-on-one with your direct reports. Make the goal of the meeting to be a listening one where you ask the right questions to keep them talking. As that trust builds, you will be able to begin weaning them off the all-answers approach to dealing with their problems because they also know you have their best interest in mind. From there, responsibility will begin to blossom.

The journey to building responsibility within your teams takes work, but the drama free results are worth every minute of effort.



Join Dennis McIntee, author of *Drama Free Teams in Health Care* and founder of the Leadership Development Group, for a four-hour extensive leadership workshop "The Drama Free Blueprint" at WALA's 2022 Spring Conference March 22-24. Learn the three mindsets needed to navigate through transition and change and master the Learning Matrix to make your future bigger than your past.

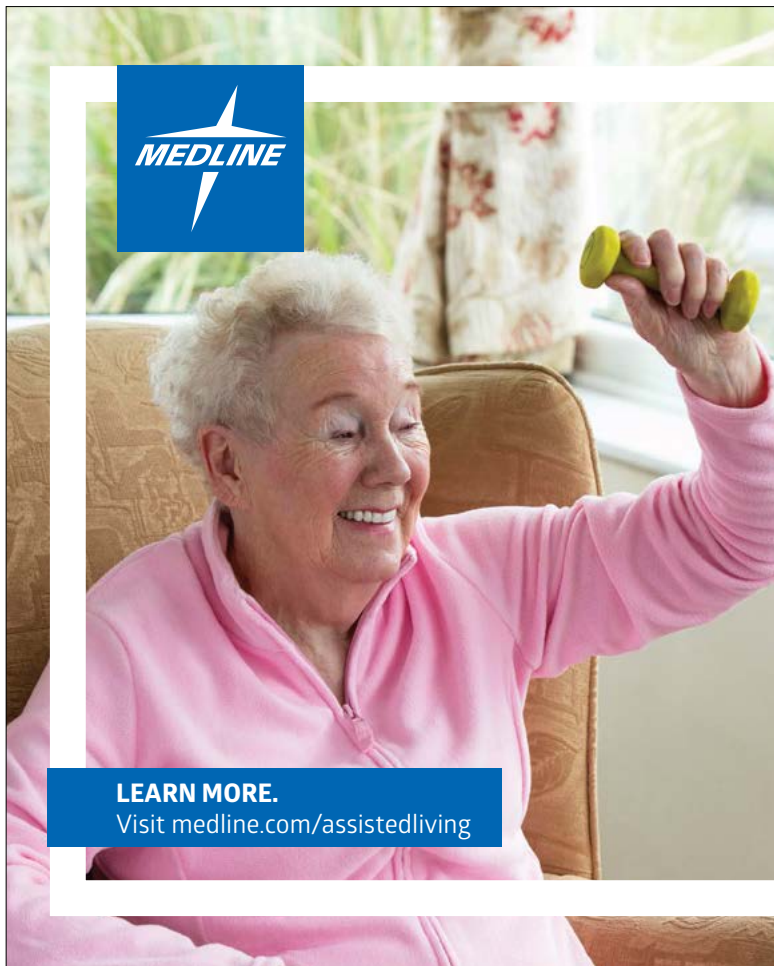
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DIAMOND ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

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DIAMOND SPOTLIGHT

Aspen Acres Assisted Living, located in Hayward, WI recently celebrated its two-year accreditation anniversary. This hardworking team has much to be proud of as they reflect on the last two years of continuous quality improvement that has helped provide high-quality care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive Director Megan Johnson tells us what accreditation means to her community in this edition of the Diamond Spotlight.

What is special or unique about your community?

The people at Aspen Acres Assisted Living (Aspen Acres) and the general community who interact with us to provide a positive resident experience is what makes Aspen Acres special, starting with our residents and their loved ones who assist with the transition to their new home at Aspen Acres. Our team members' genuine interest in providing quality care through resident-focused interactions is evident through resident council feedback. Our extensive relationships with our vendors and the medical community, including the hospital and clinics, assist in ensuring our residents and team members are provided with the resources required for success.

Why does quality improvement matter to your community?

Quality improvement matters because it provides a framework to identify areas of opportunity, a means to pursue results, and the ability to measure the effectiveness of improving resident care and safety.

Why did you choose to apply for accreditation?

We decided to pursue the WALA Diamond Accreditation from the day we opened. We believe that building a quality improvement program is crucial in providing the highest level of resident care. We felt the structure of the Diamond Program provided a realistic platform for our team to develop and maintain our own quality improvement program with an emphasis on continuous improvement.



Do you think accreditation has given or will give your community a distinction in the market? How so?

Participating in the WALA Diamond Program demonstrates our efforts to residents and their loved ones, and we believe this distinction is important in making the decision to select Aspen Acres as their new home.

What is the first thing you would recommend for someone who might be interested in quality improvement but doesn't know where to start?

Pinpoint where your facility weaknesses are. Get a committee that is interested in making changes. Get together on a regular basis and discuss smart goals regarding your weaknesses. When you get stuck, reach out to WALA — they are very helpful.

What advice would you give other communities who are interested in accreditation?

Just do it! It takes time but is very fulfilling once you are accredited.

Want to learn more about accreditation for your community?

Contact WALA for more info or visit our Diamond Accreditation Program info page at ewala.org.

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UPCOMING 2022 COURSE DATES:

VIRTUAL - FEBRUARY 2022

Feb 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23

IN-PERSON – APRIL 2022 BROOKFIELD, WI

April 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21

IN-PERSON – OCTOBER 2022 DEFOREST, WI

October 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27

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