

MONDAY

ONLINE

MAILING

Posted:12-31-2007

Top Stories

Providers Host Candidate Forum in SD 25; Governor Makes Unexpected Stop

On Jan. 3, Senate District 25 will have a special election to replace current Sen. Tom Neuville. Neuville vacated his seat at the end of November to take a Third District judgeship. Three candidates will advance to the general election on Jan. 3: Ray Cox (R-Northfield), Kevin Dahle (DFL-Northfield) and Vance Norgaard (Independent-Northfield).

Unlike most contested races for a seat in the Minnesota Senate, there have been very few opportunities in this short campaign for the candidates to debate issues of public policy, as the campaign season mostly occurred during the holidays.

Kyle Nordine, CEO of Northfield Retirement Community and **Pat Vincent, CEO of Three Links Care Center** in Northfield, saw this special election as an opportunity to raise the visibility of long term care issues and hosted a candidate forum on Thursday, Dec. 27 at the Community Resource Bank in Northfield.

Candidates Ray Cox and Kevin Dahle participated in the event. Candidate Vance Norgaard was also invited to participate but declined the invitation. The event was attended by over twenty-five citizens, including long-term care providers and residents in Northfield.

The primary focus of the forum was the future of older adult services. The candidates answered prepared questions from the Long-Term Care Imperative staff as well as spontaneous questions from members of the audience. Both candidates expressed support for increased funding for long term care, although neither would increase taxes to pay for the funding. Dahle characterized the issue as a jobs issue and pointed out that increased wages were necessary to attract a talented labor pool. Cox stated that funding for long term care would be a priority issue for him, if elected.

After the candidates debated for over an hour, Governor Pawlenty arrived somewhat unexpectedly in support of Ray Cox. He spoke on his vision of long term care. The Governor perhaps opened the door to some new options for funding cost of living increases in 2008, mentioning either surplus dollars in the health care access fund or providing relief by repealing state fees imposed on providers. The Governor stressed that he would have supported a higher cost of living increase for long term care providers, but that the legislature chose to fund other priorities within the health and human services budget, such as expanding coverage of the uninsured.

Governor Pawlenty also talked about transformation of long term care to meet the baby boomers' needs and preferences. He stressed that while cost of living increases are needed in the short term, the future of aging services is not in the annual "1 percent or 2 percent COLA increases." He renewed his challenge to think about the future of aging services, and spoke about creating a "hub and spoke" network of services, where the nursing home becomes the hub and support for additional community services. The Governor's message on transformation is consistent with some of the concepts the Long Term Care Imperative has been discussing with the administration. MHHA's Vice President of Advocacy, Kari Thurlow, was pleased with the Governor's comments. "His comments reflect a new level of interest in the topic of long term care, and progress towards a successful reform agenda."

For more information, please contact Kari Thurlow at 651-603-3512 or kthurlow@mhha.com.

MHHA to Hold Conference Calls on Property Tax Issue on Jan. 9

On Wednesday, Jan. 9, MHHA will host two telephone conference calls on issues created by the recent Minnesota Supreme Court decision on property taxes. **Please note that the date of these conference calls has been changed** from the date announced previously in a member alert. MHHA will distribute instructions for accessing the calls by e-mail on Friday, Jan. 4.

On Dec. 6, the court ruled that a nonprofit must provide goods or services for free or at substantially reduced prices in order to qualify for exemption from property taxes. The court also ruled that government payments on behalf of recipients cannot be counted as donations for purposes of determining whether the organization provides charity care. The conference calls are designed to update members on strategies to address the issues, answer questions members may have, and to offer suggestions on what to do if presented with a property tax bill by the county assessor. We hope to have the recommendations from a legal team brought together by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits available by the conference call.

Because the situations and issues are somewhat different, MHHA will conduct one conference call for care centers and another for housing members, both on Jan. 9. The care center call will be in the morning and the housing call will be in the afternoon. Members will want to reserve time in the morning or afternoon to participate in the appropriate conference call.

MHHA distributed a Member Alert on this issue on Thursday, Dec. 20. MHHA has also posted the court's decision in the "Featured Topics" section of our web site. Click on "Property Tax Case: Under the Rainbow" to read the court's decision. For further information, contact Kari Thurlow, David Feinwachs, or Darrell Shreve.

FY 2008 Appropriations Wrap Up

Before leaving for the holidays and the close of the first session of the 110th Congress, the White House and the Congress agreed upon spending for the remainder of the fiscal year 2008. The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) reports that the negotiations over the spending omnibus bill left HUD funding "particularly funding for senior programs" relatively unscathed, especially considering that many other programs covered by the bill took a 1.7 percent funding reduction. Some of the home- and community-based services programs received an increase, although some increases were smaller than those proposed earlier this year and other programs have had their funding reduced. The omnibus bill and Medicare bill also had good news for nursing homes. Here are the details:

Housing

The Section 202 program will be funded at \$735 million and the Section 811 program will be funded at \$237 million, the same funding levels as in 2007 and 2006. In providing flat funding for these programs, the Congress rejected the Administration's proposed 25 percent cut in both programs.

The \$735 million for Section 202 will be divided up as follows:

- \$628, 850,000 for capital advances and project based rental assistance awards;
- \$60 million for service coordinators;
- \$24,750,000 for assisted living conversions and emergency capital repair grants;
- \$20 million for predevelopment grants;
- \$1.4 million for the working capital fund; and
- unspecified amounts for REAC activities.

For Section 8 project-based renewals, Congress has provided \$6.139 billion, up \$163 million from last year, and host of directives to ensure that the chaos of last summer does not re-occur next summer. AAHSA notes one important victory regarding HUD's Limited English Proficiency requirements "the bill also gives the Office of Fair Housing \$380,000 to translate and make available vital documents for persons of limited English proficiency.

More details on the final bill, including the reports that Congress has mandated for HUD to address payment delays and problems in renewing contracts, is found at [HUD Appropriations Wrapup](#)

Home and Community-Based Services

- The Supportive Services and Centers program has a 2008 appropriation of \$351.348 million, a \$753,000 increase over 2007. This program provides adult day services, in-home care and senior centers.

- Congregate meals, home-delivered meals and the Nutrition Services Incentive Program will receive \$758 million in funding in 2008, a \$22.933 million increase compared to 2007.
- Social Services Block Grants, which cover adult day and other supportive services, will get the same \$1.7 billion they have received for the last several years.
- Family Caregivers Support program, which funds adult day services and some in-home services, was funded at \$153.439 million, a \$2.728 million reduction from 2007 funding.
- Choices for Independence, a program that funds nursing home diversion grants, was funded at \$16.5 million. This is \$11.5 million less than the Senate appropriations bill proposed for this program.
- Real Choice Systems Change Grants are funded at \$10 million for 2008, a \$7 million decrease from 2007.
- Lifespan Respite Care is a newly authorized program but received no funding for 2008.

Nursing Homes

In addition to the omnibus spending bill, Congress passed separate Medicare legislation primarily to prevent doctors from experiencing a 10 percent reimbursement cut on Jan. 1. Most provisions of this bill are effective only through June 30, 2008, so AAHSA anticipates more Medicare legislation in the spring. The bill includes:

- **2008 Payment Update for Nursing Facilities and Home Health Agencies:** The bill was notable for what was not in it, since AAHSA had been hearing that part or all of the payment update would be eliminated to offset the cost of relief for physicians. However, the final version of the legislation allows the full 2008 payment update to continue.
- **Therapy Caps:** The bill continues the current exceptions process for beneficiaries who need physical, speech, or occupational therapy exceeding the annual cap on coverage through June 30.
- **User Fees:** The authority to collect the fees on nursing home survey revisits ended as of Dec. 21. The House-Senate report on the omnibus spending bill states that the user fees are not authorized for revisits after that date.
- **Physician Reimbursement:** The 10.1 percent scheduled cut was replaced by a 0.5 percent reimbursement increase through June 30, 2008.
- **Special Needs Plans:** These managed care plans for beneficiaries with special needs are reauthorized through 2009, but with a moratorium on new plans and expanded service area.
- **75 Percent Rule:** The bill permanently freezes the inpatient rehabilitation services compliance threshold at 60 percent, effective for cost reporting periods starting July 1, 2006, and allows comorbid conditions to count toward this threshold.

If you have questions or need more information about 2008 appropriations for various programs, contact Nancy Libson at 202-508-9447 or Alayna Waldrum at 202-508-9476 about housing appropriations, Peter Notarstefano at 202-508-9406 about appropriations for home and community-based services and Barbara Gay at 202-508-9489 regarding Medicare and nursing home funding.

News Briefs

Personnel Law for New Employees Takes Effect January 1

On Jan. 1, 2008, a new law that affects employers who hire new employees takes effect. The law applies to employers with 20 or more employees, but it excludes employers that are state agencies, political subdivisions, commissions and boards that are subject to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13. The language was contained in Chapter 119, and it creates a new section of Minnesota Statutes, section 181.9631.

Section 181.9631 reads as follows: 181.9631 NOTICE OF EMPLOYEE RIGHTS. An employer as defined under section 181.960, subdivision 3, shall provide written notice to a job applicant upon hire of the rights and remedies provided in sections 181.960 to 181.965.

Affected members will need to give new employees a written notice that they have rights and remedies under these sections of law, which concern personnel record review and access. Sections 181.960 to 181.965 can be found at http://ros.leg.mn/bin/getpub.php?pubtype=STAT_CHAP&year=2007§ion=181. The statute does not state that the employer has to provide the employee with the specific rights and remedies. The Department of Labor and Industry is the enforcement agency, and violation of the statute could carry a fine of up to \$5,000.

For further information, contact Darrell Shreve at dshreve@mhha.com.

MDH Updates Bulletin on Nursing Home Discharge/Transfer Notice

On Dec. 26, the Minnesota Department of Health issued an update to the June 1994 Information Bulletin 94-1, NH-10, CBC-4. The revised bulletin contains an updated sample notice and current Ombudsman directory for use with the 30 day discharge/transfer notice given a nursing home resident prior to involuntary discharge or transfer. (This information supersedes Information Bulletin 92-4.) The sample notice has been revised to identify the Minnesota Disability Law Center as the agency responsible for protection and advocacy of nursing home residents with developmental disabilities or mental illness. Also added to the notice is a statement that the resident has 30 days from receipt of the discharge notice to appeal. The updated bulletin is found at http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fpc/profinfo/ib94_1.htm. For more information, contact Darrell Shreve at dshreve@mhha.com.

Next HUD Brown Bag Lunch Meeting Scheduled for Jan. 16 in Apple Valley

The next informal HUD "brown bag" lunch meeting will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 16 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Apple Valley Villa, 14610 Garrett Avenue, Apple Valley, 952-431-7800. Attendees should bring their own lunch, but drinks and dessert will be provided by our hosts, Sherri Eastgate and Vicki Asmus. A map to Apple Valley Villa is found at

<http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&q=14610+Garrett+Avenue,+Apple+Valley,+MN&ll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=47.704107,109.863281&ie=UTF8&z=>

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Alecia Crumpler at acrumpler@mhha.com by Jan. 14. For more information on these networking meetings for professionals working in HUD housing, contact Mary Youle at myoule@mhha.com.

Don't Forget! Community Service/Service Development RFP is Available Today

The Community Service/Community Services Development Request for Proposals (RFP) for state fiscal year 2009 is available for download in today's MN State Register at http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/stateregister/32_27.pdf and on the Minnesota Department of Human Services web site at www.dhs.state.mn.us. The application deadline is Feb. 29, 2008.

Two videoconferences for interested applicants will be held on Jan. 4, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Central Standard Time. Responders interested in attending the videoconference must register online at: <http://agingtraining.dhs.state.mn.us> no later than 2 p.m., Jan. 3, 2008.

The videoconference will be available at the following locations: Anoka County Government Center, Blue Earth County Human Services, Clay County Family Services Center, Crow Wing County Social Services, Douglas County Human Services, Freeborn County Department of Human Services, Hubbard County, Itasca County Courthouse, Kanabec County Courthouse, Koochiching County Courthouse, Lake County Service Center, Lyon County Government Center, MN Department of Human Services, Nobles County Courthouse, Polk County Courthouse, Roseau County Social Services, St. Louis County Government Center-Duluth, Stevens County Human Services, Winona County Office Building and Wright County Human Services.

For more information, contact Lori Meyer at 651-645-4545 or lmeyer@mhha.com.

Bayer Recalls Glucose Test Strips

Bayer Diabetes Care has voluntarily recalled test strips (sensors) used exclusively with the Contour TS Blood Glucose Meter. The product was recalled because test strips from specific lots could result in blood glucose readings with a positive bias that could demonstrate 5 to 17 percent higher test results. This issue is unrelated to the Contour TS meter itself and pertains only to certain test strips used with the meter. There is no impact on the performance of strips with other Bayer meters.

Members who use Contour TS are advised to check the lot number of the test strips in their inventory. The lot numbers can be found on the bottom of the box and on the side of the bottle containing the strips. The affected lots begin with WK followed by the characters 7D, 7E, 7F or 7G and then followed by a series of other numbers and letters (for example WK7ED3E52C). Only bottles of test strips with the characters 7D, 7E, 7F, or 7G in the third and fourth position in the sequence are affected. Bottles with a lot number including 7J through 7M after WK are not affected and need not be returned. Please call the Bayer customer service phone number (1-800-348-8100) to return any affected bottle of strips and to get a replacement.

MHHA Conducting Important Surveys of Housing Members

A couple of weeks ago, MHHA mailed out the 2008 Long-Term Care Imperative Housing Legislative Survey to all housing members. That survey will provide the Long-Term Care Imperative with essential information for its advocacy efforts on senior housing issues. In addition to collecting some important information on the Elderly Waiver program, including the impact of changes to 24-hour customized living, the survey also collects important data impacting all housing members, including property tax status and credentials of housing managers. We ask that all of our housing members complete and return this survey as quickly as possible so that we are prepared for the legislative session that begins in February.

MHHA will also continue to collect data from housing members through our quarterly senior housing data survey. An e-mail reminder for the 4th quarter of 2007 edition of that survey will be sent later this week, and a hard copy of the survey will also be sent to members. That survey collects valuable information on resident turnover, vacancy rates, and resident payor sources, and all housing members are encouraged to participate.

MHHA would like to thank our housing members for participating in these important data collection efforts. Members with questions about either of the housing surveys should contact Jeff Bostic at jbostic@mhha.com.

Kvenvold to Speak at Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging's Second Annual Policy Summit

The Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging (MLCOA) will hold its second Annual Aging Policy Summit on Jan. 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center. The summit is called "Aging Policy in PlayâC"Connecting the Dots" and seeks to create a vision and framework that aligns and integrates long-term care policy, systems reform and legislative initiatives.

Gayle Kvenvold, MHHA President/CEO, and Patti Cullen, Care Providers of Minnesota President/CEO, will be participating on a panel facilitated by Tom Horner, Co-Founder & Principal, Himle Horner Inc. Other confirmed speakers are:

- Sean Kershaw, Executive Director, Citizens League;
- Jean Wood, Executive Director, MN Board on Aging;
- Malcolm Mitchell, Co-Chair, MNLCOA Policy Committee (Executive Director of Elderberry Institute);
- Margaret Donahoe, Transportation Alliance (Lobbyist for MN Public Transit Association);
- Steve Larson, Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (Executive Director of Arc of Minnesota); and
- Dawn Simonson, Co-Chair, MNLCOA Policy Committee (Executive Director of Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging).

Registration materials are available online at <http://www.mnlcoa.org> or by contacting gail@tcaging.org. For further information, contact Kari Thurlow at 651-603-3512 or kthurlow@mhha.com.

Alzheimer's Association Seeks Professionals to Work on Supports for Persons with Early Stage Alzheimer's Disease

The Alzheimer's Association (Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter) is seeking professionals who are interested in working together to develop programs and services for people, irrespective of age, with early stage dementia in our communities. An initial meeting is set for Jan. 11, 2008 and will feature a volunteer with Early Stage Alzheimer's Disease. His story points to the critical need for programs and services for those in the early stage of this disease.

If you are interested in working with the Alzheimer's Association to coordinate existing resources and create new support systems to better the lives of those facing the challenges of Alzheimer's disease when they can be part of the decision-making and problem-solving process, please contact Diane Plowman, the Early Stage Manager at the Alzheimer's Association, at Diane.Plowman@alzmdak.org.

Does Your Local Senior Center have an Outstanding Program to Promote Healthy Lifestyles?

CVS/pharmacy and the National Institute of Senior Centers, an interest group of the National Council on Aging (NCOA), have partnered to present the Prescription for Better Health & Wellness Award, a new award designed to honor a senior center for outstanding work in promoting a healthy lifestyle for seniors in its community. Nominated senior centers must provide details on a unique health or well-being program they offer that is educational and/or participatory. Centers must demonstrate an ongoing commitment above and beyond normal approaches and mention any innovative community partnerships that support it. Anecdotal evidence or stories of how the center went the extra mile or how a senior was affected by the program also will be accepted.

The winner will receive \$1,000 cash, paid expenses for one person to attend the NCOA-American Society on Aging's (ASA) "Aging in America" conference in Washington, D.C. in March (up to \$1,400 value), and the opportunity to present the winning program during one of NCOA's monthly Healthy Aging Briefing Webinars in 2008. Five senior centers will receive honorable mentions and have their programs featured on the NCOA Web site.

The deadline for submissions is Jan. 30. Nomination forms are available online at <http://ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=44&detail=2240>.

DHS Redesigns Application Form for MA LTC and Waiver Services

The Minnesota Department of Human Services issued bulletin #07-21-12, which includes a redesigned application form for individuals seeking Medical Assistance (MA) payment of long-term care services, including waiver services. The bulletin says DHS has reduced the size of the Minnesota Health Care Programs Application (HCAPP) and made it easier to understand after receiving input from consumers, counties, the Center for Literacy and others. DHS plans to translate the HCAPP into other languages, beginning with Spanish. The bulletin with the Minnesota Health Care Programs Application form and the Long-Term Care and Waiver Services Application are found at http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs16_139989.pdf.

Certified Eden Associate Training to be Offered in MN Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2008

The Minnesota Veteran's Home in Luverne, MN, will host certified Eden Associate Training Jan. 30-Feb. 1. This program is approved by National Association of Boards for 21 Training/Contact Hours. The program is designed for persons interested in making a difference in long-term care: nursing home administrators, DONs, nurses, nursing home owners, social workers, therapists, hands-on care partners, surveyors, ombudsmen and other elder advocates, and seniors. The cost is \$475 per participant (early bird) or \$525 per participant after Jan. 17. The group rate for two or more people is \$450.00 per participant. To register, contact Eden Home Office at education@edenalt.org or call 1-512-847-6061 as this training session is not yet posted on the web site at www.edenalt.org.

AAHSA Offers Updated Calculation Tool for 2008 Increases in Therapy Rates

Because Medicare reimbursement for rehabilitation therapy is tied to the physician payment schedule, the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging has updated its calculation tool for 2008 rehabilitation therapy codes to reflect the physician payment relief Congress just passed. Like the physician payment provisions, these therapy codes are good through June 30, 2008. This tool is available to AAHSA members at http://www.aahsa.org/login.asp?strUrl=/advocacy/nursing_homes/payment_financing/therapy_payment/default.asp. For more information, contact Iara Woody at 202-508-9429.

DHS Issues Bulletin on EW/AC Caregiver Services and Respite Options

The Department of Human Services issued a Dec. 20 bulletin, #07-25-08, "Policy Clarification for Caregiver Services and Respite Options for Families of Older Adults"

that clarifies policies concerning caregiver education and training, respite care services, consumer directed respite options, companion and adult day services under the Elderly Waiver and Alternative Care programs. This new bulletin replaces bulletin #03-25-06 and is found at http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs16_140049.pdf

Preliminary Research Shows Culture Change Can Improve NH Quality Without Increasing Costs

The Pioneer Network recently released a study suggesting that nursing home culture change policies and practices potentially improve quality for residents, but do not impose a detrimental effect on costs to providers. Researchers hope that measurable outcomes like these will help create opportunities for strategies such as Medicaid waivers to reward homes that actively reduce morbidity and improve cost efficiency through innovative practices. The report is available at <http://www.pioneernetwork.net/news-and-events/PreliminaryResearchSupportsNursingHome.php>. For more information, contact Bruce Rosenthal at 202-508-9499.

Third Annual Medicare Contractor Provider Satisfaction Survey Underway

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) began its third annual Medicare Contractor Provider Satisfaction Survey (MCPSS) to a new sample of 35,000 randomly selected Medicare providers. This survey allows providers to give feedback on contractors' performance as a way to improve efforts at the contractor level. Those selected to participate in the survey were to be notified in December and are asked to complete and return the 15-minute survey as soon as possible. Results will be released in July, 2008. Providers can submit their response via a secure web site, mail, fax or over the phone. More information about MCPSS is found at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MCPSS/>, or contact Tara Woody at 202-508-9429.

Linneman Offers Challenge to Seniors Housing Leaders at the NIC Annual Conference

Speaking to a standing-room only crowd at the National Investment Center for the Senior Housing & Care Industry (NIC) Annual Conference in October, Dr. Peter Linneman, professor of real estate, finance and public policy at the Wharton School of Business and publisher of the Linneman Report, challenged the senior housing and care industry to develop transparency or real estate professionals will continue to ignore this industry as a major asset class. Linneman's talk, "On Becoming a Major Commercial Real Estate Asset Class," provided insights on the capital markets, and what that means for the economy and senior living specifically. He also addressed some broader issues in the housing market, such as the subprime market problems. Some of Linneman's provocative comments included in the *NIC Newsletter* article included:

- "It's amazing how much dumb money is out there. Many people have more money than brains. They have no time for underwriting."
- "The loss from the subprime is that we have 450,000 too many empty homes. And they are highly concentrated. About 50 percent of them are in Tampa, Orlando, the Inland Empire (e.g., Ohio), Phoenix and Las Vegas. But the good news is that they are in fast-growth markets, so it will only take 3-4 years to absorb most of these homes."
- "In a risk-adjusted sense, I'd say seniors housing and care is a 'buy.' But there are challenges ahead. You've done a miserable job of laying out why this sector is interesting. Demographics are not on your side, at least in the near term. You've not been transparent. You're not liquid. You've got this bizarre union issue. And, you have a lot of revenue for certain product niches coming from the government. And no man is safe while the legislature is in session."
- "Forget demographics. It takes too long. Instead, focus on penetration. Growth is the answer. You just need to tell people that seniors housing is a better product. You have to let them know that it's a place to live â€" not to die. It's better than apartment life. It's a community."

To order an audiotape or a CD of Dr. Linneman's address, or other sessions from the NIC Conference, call Audio Excellence at (727) 360-6726. Or send an email to AUDEXC@aol.com.

Erickson School Launches National Study of Physician Care in Assisted Living

The Erickson School's Center for Aging Studies (CAS) at the University of Maryland is launching a multi-state, 30-month study investigating the role of physicians in providing care to residents of assisted living (AL) facilities. The study is funded by a \$1.2 million grant from the National Institute of Aging (NIA) and is the first federally-funded study to systematically examine how physicians and staff of assisted living facilities interact regarding the healthcare of the nearly 1 million assisted living residents nationwide.

Beginning in Jan. 2008, UMBC researchers and collaborators from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill will interview physicians and assisted living healthcare staff caring for 360 randomly selected residents of nearly 100 assisted living facilities across six states.

Dr. John Schumacher, associate director of the Center for Aging Studies and principal investigator in the study, says, "Without first hand information of their local AL facilities, many physicians simply equate assisted living residence with institutionalized nursing home care, when in fact AL settings are community-based and can have an entirely different range of supportive healthcare, wellness, and other services." Schumacher added, "Physicians have not been educated or encouraged to modify their practice patterns to engage the unique needs, circumstances, and opportunities of caring for AL residents."

The Erickson School's press release notes that physicians are financially discouraged from visiting and interacting with AL facilities due to substantially lower Medicare reimbursement rates for AL patient visits and thus "lost" income for the physicians' medical practices. And unlike the heavily federally-regulated nursing home industry, AL regulations are enacted exclusively at the state level, are continuously updated and vary quite significantly by state, which adds significantly to the complexity of physician interaction with AL residents.

For more information on this study, contact Kavan Peterson at 410-455-1896 or kavan@umbc.edu. More information about the Erickson School's Center for Aging Studies is available at <http://erickson.umbc.edu/research/centeragingstudies.aspx>

Association News

MHHA Institute Scholarships Available!

MHHA's Institute for Older Adult Services is the signature learning and networking event of the year in Minnesota. MHHA recognizes that financial strains might be preventing your company from attending the very event that can provide important information, knowledge and affirmation of your work when you need it the most. Through the generous support of the MHHA 2008 Annual Sponsors listed below, MHHA is able to offer five facility scholarships for the Institute based on financial need. (Lodging, meals and other expenses are not included.) The consideration process is designed to be respectful of a member's financial status and to preserve confidentiality. Scholarships are limited to one scholarship per facility. Application forms have been mailed to members and completed forms must be returned to MHHA by Jan. 11, 2008.

Special thanks to the following MHHA Institute for Older Adult Services sponsors: McKesson Medical Surgical, Merwin Long Term Care Pharmacy, Omnicare Minnesota, PharMerica and SCA Personal Care.

For further information or a copy of the application form, please contact Adam Suomala, asuomala@mhha.com.

MHHA PAC Seeks Donations for Silent Auction

The MHHA Institute for Older Adult Services is quickly approaching and we are looking forward to seeing you in 2008. In addition to fabulous education and networking opportunities, this event will also launch MHHA PAC's new, aggressive fundraising strategy that will help support its political efforts in the 2008 election year. We have set a goal to raise \$35,000 in 2008.

MHHA PAC hopes to kick off its fundraising with a bang with a silent auction that will be held in conjunction with the MHHA Institute. We are seeking donations that can be put up for bid at the silent auction. Our goal is offer at least 100 items for bid with a range of values at this event. This is an excellent way to support MHHA PAC and have your support publicly recognized at MHHA's biggest event of the year. Think creatively: from gift baskets, to trips, to sporting events, to unusual experiences that MHHA members cannot purchase at the Mall.

We are working on a short time frame to gather donations for the silent auction and hope to have commitments for donations no later than Jan. 16.

In the coming days and weeks MHHA staff and MHHA PAC Board members will be contacting you to ask for your contributions. But, you don't have to wait for us to contact you if you have something to donate. You can also contact Rebecca Fritz, MHHA PAC's Volunteer Silent Auction Coordinator by e-mail at fritz6pak@charter.net or Kari Thurlow, MHHA Vice President of Advocacy, at 651-603-3512 or kthurlow@mhha.com.

January Legislative Town Hall Forums

All members are asked to attend their January MHHA District Meeting, where MHHA's advocacy efforts will take a new turn and legislators will be invited to our table for a spirited dialogue on the issues facing aging services and how they will be addressed in the coming 2008 legislative session. As efforts to produce meaningful results kick into a higher gear for the New Year, we need you to attend this powerful day of advocacy!

Before the legislative town hall forum begins, staff will review with members the final 2008 agenda, walk through key talking points and answer questions. Then we jump into the action with a panel of legislative leaders, including an overview presentation of key trends facing providers, the rollout of our advocacy agenda, a look inside the session from the legislator's perspective and ask questions and share examples with our panel of elected officials.

Staff is securing commitments from regional legislative leaders to participate in the panel discussion at each meeting. Members are also encouraged to contact their state representative and state senator with an invitation to attend. For contact information or to report attendance of your elected officials, contact Kari Thurlow at 651-603-3512 or kthurlow@mhha.com.

We're doing things differently and we need everyone to be here in a show of force, so mark your calendar today:

- January 15, District C, 1-4 p.m., Nelson Gables, 1220 Nokomis Street, Alexandria
- January 16, District A, 12-3 p.m., Fireside Grill & Patio, Highway 2 West, Bagley
- January 17, District B, 9-12 p.m., Lakeshore (A Superior Way of Life), 4002 London Road, Duluth
- January 22, District D, 9-12 p.m., Elim Care and Rehab Center, 701 1st street, Princeton
- January 23, District E, 12-3:30 p.m., Redwood Area Community Center, 901 Cook Street, Redwood Falls
- January 24, District F, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Cabela's, 3900 Cabela Drive, Owatonna
- January 25, District G, 9 a.m.-12 noon, Lyngblomsten Care Center, 1415 Almond Avenue, St. Paul.

For further information, read more about our program online at <http://www.mhha.com/inc/data/januaryprogram.pdf> or contact Adam Suomala at 651-603-3530 or asuomala@mhha.com.

Plan Ahead for the 2008 Institute: Secure Your Lodging Today

MHHA has secured the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis as its headquarter hotel. A block of rooms is reserved at the Hyatt under the "MHHA Institute" name. To make reservations, contact the hotel directly at 612-370-1234 or use the following link to register online: <http://minneapolis.hyatt.com/groupbooking/msprmmnh2008>. Rooms are \$99 for a single and \$109 for a double. Be sure to mention that you are with the "MHHA Institute" when registering with the Hyatt in order to get the conference rate on your sleeping room. The block of rooms will be held until Friday, Jan. 11, 2008. Act now as the Hyatt does sell out.

MHHA thanks business partner [Boyer & Associates, LLC](#) and our other business partners for their support.

Minnesota Health and Housing Alliance
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