



LAGNIAPPE

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National Nursing Home Week Theme Announced



All across our nation, skilled nursing care facilities create a unique spirit and community for residents and staff alike. Visit one of these nursing facilities in your town or city and

you will witness the American spirit in action. Stories from proud veterans, immigrants and hardworking people of different faiths fill the walls of each facility every day. This tapestry of cultures and experiences captures the essence of our country. Beginning May 14 to 20, 2017, the nation will salute skilled nursing care facilities and the role they embrace in society with the theme "[Spirit of America](#)." The Planning Guide and Product Catalog will be available by March next year with exclusive ideas and themed-products.

View the [Facebook page](#) for updates and information on AHCA's [website](#) once the planning guide and product catalog become available next year.

Medicare Part B Therapy Cap Values for Calendar Year (CY) 2017



The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced a \$20 update to the annual per-beneficiary Medicare Part B outpatient therapy caps for CY 2017. For physical therapy (PT) and speech-language pathology (SLP) combined, the 2017 therapy cap will be \$1,980. For occupational therapy (OT), the cap for 2017 will be \$1,980. The effective date is January 1, 2017. Make sure that your billing department is aware of these therapy cap value updates.

Background:

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-33), Section 4541(c) applies annual financial limitations on expenses considered incurred for outpatient therapy services under Medicare Part B per beneficiary, commonly referred to as "therapy caps." Therapy caps are updated each year based on the Medicare Economic Index. An exception for the therapy caps for reasonable and medically necessary services has been in place since CY 2006. Originally required by Section 5107 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, the exceptions process for the therapy caps has been continuously extended multiple times through subsequent legislation. The current therapy caps exceptions process, and associated targeted medical review for claims over a \$3700 annual PT/SLP or OT threshold, as required by Section 202 of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, expires on December 31, 2017.

PATH Offers Continuing Incentives to Invest

Beginning in 2008, there have been various Stimulus Acts and Bills passed by Congress that greatly affect Section 179 depreciation and purchasing small equipment for tax reporting purposes. Prior to the initial Stimulus Act in 2008, Section 179 allowed for businesses to expense up to \$125,000 on qualifying equipment - and the deduction began to phase out for companies that spent over \$500,000, truly making it a small business tax incentive. At that time, Section 179 was slated to wind down in future years with reduced deduction limits and eventually eliminated completely. However, over the last few years Section 179 has garnered much attention and gone through numerous enhancements via multiple Stimulus Acts designed to give businesses incentive to invest in themselves by purchasing, financing, or leasing new equipment and software.

Fast forward to 2015 when the President signed into law The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 (PATH). PATH raised the limit on section 179 spending back to a cap of \$500,000 permanently, brought back the \$2 million dollar spending cap for phase out, and the 50% bonus depreciation. The PATH Act reinstated Bonus Depreciation to 50% of new equipment cost through the 2017 tax year. **This Bonus Depreciation is utilized after the Section 179 deduction limit of \$2 million in total equipment, vehicles, and/or software cost is reached.** In other words, if you buy enough equipment to exceed the \$500,000 deduction, you can take a “bonus” 50% depreciation on the rest. As the TV commercials say – ACT NOW! If you want to take advantage of the \$500,000 write-off for the 2016 tax year, you need to act before the end of this year. Consult your tax advisor to learn if PATH can benefit your operations.



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ANCC Board Certified RNs May Help Reduce Rehospitalization Baseline Rates Under Medicare's New Value-Based Purchasing System



CMS begins tracking skilled nursing rehospitalization rates on January 1, 2017 for the new SNF Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) program. Under the VBP program, claims for services furnished on or after Oct. 1, 2018, will be subject to a 2% withhold.

Providers will have the opportunity to get some or all of this money back depending on how well they do in managing hospital readmissions and meeting or exceeding performance standards.

SNFs will be rated on achievement against all other facilities nationally as well as on their own improvement, comparing their rate during 2017 with their previous performance during 2015.

The key metric for the program is known as the SNF 30-Day All-Cause Readmission Measure (SNFRM). SNFRM estimates a risk-standardized rate of all-cause, unplanned hospital readmissions of Medicare SNF beneficiaries within 30 days of discharge from their prior acute hospitalization.

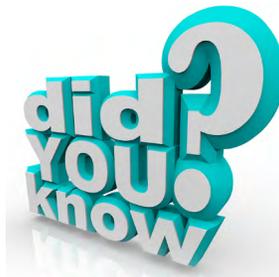
Research conducted by AHCA/NCAL this summer found that the rehospitalization rates in nursing facilities with at least one RN certified in gerontological nursing by the [American Nurses Credentialing Center \(ANCC\)](#) consistently have run at least two percentage points lower than the national average since 2011. Lower rehospitalization rates will be key to success under the new CMS VBP program.

In addition, AHCA/NCAL research found that nursing facilities with at least one ANCC board certified nurse were twice as likely to receive an overall 5-Star rating from CMS and far less likely to receive a 1-Star rating. ANCC is the world's largest and most prestigious nurse credentialing organization and a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association. Less than one percent of America's RNs are board certified in gerontological nursing.

To help increase the number of board certified RNs, [AHCA/NCAL's Gero Nurse Prep](#) program is designed to help RNs prepare for and pass the ANCC gerontological certification exam. RNs who complete the AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep program have a passing rate of 96 percent on the ANCC exam and receive 30 CEUs.

AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep is on sale now and each RN registrant can save \$100 off his/her Gero Nurse Prep by entering promo code **STARS2016** (all caps) at checkout. That means RNs who are interested can become board certified for less than \$1,000 (\$590 sale price for AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep and a separate \$395 to take the ANCC exam). The sale ends November 30.

AHCA/NCAL members seeking to reduce their rehospitalization rates are encouraged to examine ANCC certification for their RN leaders. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about AHCA/NCAL Gero Nurse Prep or click on the [course preview](#) to get a quick view of this engaging on-line curriculum designed to help RNs pass the ANCC exam.



Did you know LNHA has two scholarship opportunities for the Gero Nurse Prep course? If you would like to nominate yourself or an employee for this scholarship, email [Karen Miller](#) for more information. For FAQs about the partial scholarship, click [here](#).

Job Opening: Food Service Director with Cooking Responsibilities



The Congregation of St. Joseph has an immediate opening for a **Full Time Food Service Director** for their small assisted living facility located in Baton Rouge.

Required skills:

- Ability to plan and prepare all meals;
- Knowledge of nutrition principles and food sanitation and safety;
- Previous food service operation and management experience;
- Possess communication and leadership skills and an ability to supervise and secure the cooperation of the dietary personnel;
- Be able to work a flexible schedule;
- Enjoy working with geriatric residents.

The Congregation of St. Joseph offers a friendly work environment and a comprehensive benefits package to include medical, dental, vision, pension, 403(b) and paid time off. Send your letter of interest and resume to pmcintyre@csjoseph.org by December 4, 2016.

LNHA Board President Urges Companies to Donate to Flood Relief Fund



At the September board meeting, the LNHA Board of Directors voted to raise monies to support the employees of LNHA member nursing facilities who suffered flood damage to their homes, vehicles and personal possessions during the Great Flood of 2016 and the spring flooding in North Louisiana.

I urge facilities and associate members to participate in this effort by donating a minimum \$500 which is tax deductible. Over the past month we have received less than 20% participation.

I encourage every member to participate so we can make a difference in the lives of those employees who are affected by this tragic flooding. Please make your check payable to: Louisiana Long Term Care Foundation. When mailing the check, address it to 7844 Office Park Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA, 70809, and include **"Flood Relief"** on the check's memo line.

Sincerely,



Ron Goux
LNHA Board President

Save the Dates for 2017



LNHA Spring Conference
May 1-3, 2017
Baton Rouge Crowne Plaza

LNHA Annual Convention & Trade Show
September 6-8, 2017
New Orleans Marriott



The Lagniappe e-newsletter is published twice a month by the Louisiana Nursing Home Association. Lagniappe is provided as a membership benefit. If you have any questions about Lagniappe, contact LNHA Communications Director [Karen Miller](#).