



Visit our COVID-19 Page Here

Dear Member:

Thank You Caregivers – You are our LTC Superheroes

Please take a moment to watch our newly released PSA (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrKGBDiQ6-o&feature=emb_err_woyt) produced jointly by MHCA, the Maine Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and the Home Care and Hospice Alliance of Maine. This 30-second spot, featuring some of the photos from our LTC Superheroes program, honors the outstanding work and commitment our employees have displayed during COVID-19. It will be aired first for 3-4 weeks on CBS, Fox, NBC and the CW on WAGM-Channel 8 Presque Isle. We are working to have it placed in the greater Portland and Bangor TV markets as well. Feel free to share this on your social media outlets. MHCA thanks our caregivers; you are our LTC Superheroes!

Good News: HHS Releases \$4.9 Billion to Skilled Nursing Centers

For the past several weeks, AHCA/NCAL's efforts in D.C. have been focused largely on a request to HHS to establish a fund to provide financial support specifically to long term care facilities. Last evening, we learned that the federal government will allocate [**\\$4.9 billion to certified skilled nursing centers**](#), from the Provider Relief Fund created by the CARES Act.

Every provider, whether you have cases of COVID-19 or not, is fighting to protect residents or keep the virus out the building. This has required substantial outlays for PPE, testing, agency staff and hero pay for regular staff as we isolate and cohort residents, prevent staff from working across units, and increase cleaning and infection control procedures. If a nursing home has COVID-19 positive patients, those costs double and triple.

Providers will be paid electronically where possible. We've heard from a few members today that funds have landed in their accounts. Providers who normally receive a paper check for reimbursement from CMS will receive a paper check in the mail for this payment as well, within the next few weeks. HHS will make relief fund distributions to SNFs based on both a fixed basis and variable basis. **Each SNF will receive a fixed distribution of \$50,000, plus a distribution of \$2,500 per bed.**

Providers must [**attest**](#) that they will only use Provider Relief Fund payments for permissible purposes and agree to comply with future government audit and reporting requirements. Unfortunately, assisted living providers still have not received the federal relief funds they need. This has happened for a variety of reasons. One issue is that because assisted living is not federally regulated, there is not a simple way to create a group of eligible providers or a methodology to pay them. AHCA/NCAL and MHCA know this is creating a real hardship for our assisted living members and we are committed to working on this challenge.

FrontLine WarmLine: Here to Help Maine's HCWs

MHCA reminds members of the State's volunteer phone support service, the **FrontLine**

WarmLine designed to help Maine health care workers and first responders manage the stress of serving on the front lines of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The line is staffed by volunteer professionals activated through Maine Responds, including licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, social workers, and nurse practitioners, who can help callers to deal with anxiety, irritability stress, poor sleep, grief or worry and, if needed, connect them with additional supports. The **FrontLine WarmLine** is available to clinicians and first responders from **8 am to 8 pm, 7 days a week by calling (207) 221-8196 or 866-367-4440.**

Innovation Corner – The Hawthorne House Happy Hut

COVID-19 has brought many challenges to long term care providers who are working hard to strike the balance between keeping residents safe and providing socializations. Inspired by a social media post, Hawthorne House Administrator Eric Pooler gave the green light to a plexiglass meeting space where residents and families could see and hear one another safely.

The Maintenance Department went to work and within hours, the meeting space was created. The facility reviewed its floorplan to choose a proper location, ensuring that exits were not blocked and fire safety codes maintained. It is floor to ceiling and although the facility purchased technology to facilitate communication, hearing has not been a problem through the plexiglass to date. Visits are scheduled through the social services department and the area is completely sanitized in between use and all other infection control procedures followed.

Pooler notes, “I understand why we have the visitation restrictions, but we need to recognize the psychosocial ramifications of residents not seeing their families over time. I know how I would feel if it were my family. The Happy Hut allows families to see their loved ones up close and is bringing joy to many in a safe manner.”

Feedback from families and residents has been extremely positive. Plans are underway to create a similar structure at their assisted living facility, Freeport Place, which is its own separate building adjacent to the nursing home. Check out the feedback on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HawthorneHouseFreeport>

If you have an idea to share, please email ngrosso@mehca.org with **Innovation Corner** in the subject line.

Thank you for all you do to care for your residents and staff.

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