The Spring meeting of the CALCRA Board of Directors will be held Thursday, April 19, beginning at 8:30 am at La Costa Glen, 1940 Levant St., Carlsbad 92009. All CALCRA members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

When issues arise in our communities, the message we usually hear from our administrators is that we all should be “on the same page.” In practice this usually translates into, “residents should adopt the thinking and viewpoint of administration and not say anything to the contrary.” But we live in relatively good-sized facilities, part of a large, complex industry. It is not realistic to expect there to be one, and only one, way to approach an issue, or only one right answer to any problem.

But there seems to be a temptation for many providers to stifle differing viewpoints. We often hear from administrators that, “We're all in this together.” Perhaps, but that does not mean that residents and administrators should be expected to agree completely on every issue; in fact, it only makes sense for residents to have a different perspective than administrators. Yes, we all want our facility to be successful, but that very likely means one thing to me, another to your Executive Administrator or Director, and perhaps something entirely different to you. For example, my view of success for the facility where I live is a skilled nursing facility where I am not afraid to be admitted as a patient; it is a dining room that serves me food that is healthy and tasty; and it is a facility that is well maintained. If I could guess at my Executive Administrator's definition of success here, it would include full occupancy, and no personnel problems from staff or complaints from residents. So, yes, we both want our CCRC to be successful, but the elements that define our views of that success are different. Does that mean one is right and the other is wrong? No; its just a complex issue, and there should be room for more than one approach to finding an answer. And disagreement is not necessarily a negative. As CALCRA's past president Walt Rozett liked to say, you learn more from those who disagree with you than from those who simply share your point of view.

So, as I said earlier, yes, we want our facilities to be successful, but our perspective as residents – our “take” on issues – should not be expected to merely echo what is offered by administration. Resident perspectives have as much value as any other stakeholder in the CCRC industry, and I’d like to give you 3 reasons why those perspectives should be expected to be different from administration's.

1. Our administrators come to our facilities for several hours a day and at the end of the day they go home. We live here. At the end of the day, we stay right here. There's nowhere else for us to go. The facility is our home.

2. Our administrators are paid to be at the facility. On the other hand we paid, most of us a great chunk of our life's savings, to be at the facility – and we continue to pay substantial fees each month for our care and services.

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 Calling All Finance Committee Folks

Our Resident Finance Committees pour over figures, and ponder financial statements and related documents on behalf of the residents of their communities. Trying to understand a CCRC's financial position, relay that information to residents in understandable terms, and engage management in productive discussions can be a daunting prospect!

CALCRA would like to facilitate communication between the Finance Committees of all our communities, giving those who are interested an introduction to their comrades in other locations and an opportunity to share insights and get assistance with thorny issues.

If you are a member of a local Finance Committee and would like to be included in this project, please respond to Margaret Griffin at info@calcra.org with your name, email and phone number, and the name of your CCRC.

Also, we are happy to share a helpful, basic resource titled “CCRC Finances: a Guide Book for Members of CCRC Resident Finance Committees”. Prepared and updated last year by the Finance Committee of the Organization of Resident Associations of New Jersey (ORANJ)”, it has much of interest to those of us in other states as well. You may request a copy from Margaret Griffin at info@calcra.org. Who knows – perhaps someone may be inspired to author a similar guide book written for California CCRCs!

Members of the board are available to speak at your community. Contact Margaret Griffin at info@calcra.org or (530) 747-6471 for more information.

Are Your Dues Due?

The CALCRA membership year runs from January – December. To see the year for which you've paid, look at your address label on this newsletter. Following your name is a 4-digit number which is the year for which you've paid. If it says 2017, we have not yet received your payment for 2018.

Payments ($25 for an individual, $35 for a couple) may be sent to Al Hale, 1515 Shasta Dr., #4104, Davis, CA 95616. Contributions in addition to dues are always welcome!
New Shingles Vaccine

In January 2018, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) formally recommended that all healthy adults 50 and older get two doses of a newly approved vaccine for shingles called Shingrix. It is more effective than the older vaccine, Zostavax; the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved it in October.

One out of every three people will develop shingles in their lifetime. “If you’ve had chickenpox, you are at risk for shingles,” said Dr. William Shaffner, medical director and former president of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID). “Your risk of getting shingles increases as you age, especially after age 50.” According to the CDC, the only way to reduce the risk of developing shingles and the long-term pain from postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) is to get vaccinated. It is not passed from person to person. Talk with your health care professional if you have questions about shingles vaccination.

Why Join CALCRA con’t...

3. For our administrators, this is just a job; they have a boss and an outside life of family and friends. For many of us, this is our life. If we have family and friends outside our facility, it is often difficult to see and interact with them. Our facility is our primary universe.

But finding our voice as individual residents can be challenging. Taking a stand that is not embraced by administration can feel uncomfortable. That’s where CALCRA comes in. CALCRA’s only purpose is to enhance the quality of life and financial security of CCRC residents. CALCRA has only your interest at heart, and is not beholden to any administrative entity or organizational chart. While we make every attempt to work cooperatively and collaboratively with providers, we will move to oppose those actions that infringe on or don’t support resident rights.

Making the decision to move to a CCRC usually comes at that point in life where one has retired from a career; seen the family grown and off on their own; health issues may be surfacing. It feels like time to slow down. Up until now, life has been a series of acquisitions and achievements. Now we must deal with downsizing, personal losses and restrictions. We make a large entry fee payment to the CCRC with the prospect of substantial monthly fees. It is not wholly unreasonable to feel, “I’ve paid my money, now just take care of me and, for heaven’s sake, don’t give me any problems or trouble!” The notion of paying attention to the operations or business end of CCRC living are not what we bargained for and may seem like just too much to take on.

But choosing to ignore the business implications of your CCRC residency is not wise. The contract you signed to move into your community is no different from any other contract you’ve been a party to – any business agreement, partnership, home loan, etc. In these situations did you expect the other party to have your best interests at heart – to look out for you? No. And it is not realistic to cede that authority and power to your CCRC provider. As business people (yes, even the nonprofit organizations), they must put the needs and interests of the organization first. Not your needs. While you may not feel comfortable or able to take on these issues yourself, I would ask that you consider supporting the one organization that exists to do this work: CALCRA.

To those of you who have already paid your dues for this year, thank you. If you have not yet paid your dues for this year, now is the time to do it. To those who have not only paid your dues but contributed additional amounts, bless you. Download a membership form from our website (www.calcra.org) and share it with a friend who has yet to join. If every member did that, we’d be twice as strong as we are now. Remember, “CALCRA needs you, and you need CALCRA.”

CALCRA needs you and you need CALCRA.
Who Is the Senior Medicare Patrol?

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is a group of highly trained volunteers who help Medicare beneficiaries prevent, detect and report healthcare fraud. SMP volunteers teach Medicare beneficiaries how to protect their personal health information, identify and report errors on their healthcare statements, recognize scams – such as illegal marketing, providing unnecessary services and charging for services that were not provided – and report fraud and abuse to the proper authorities. According to the U.S. government, the Medicare Trust Fund loses between $60 and $90 Billion dollars every year to fraud, waste and abuse. The Senior Medicare Patrol program helps you recognize and guard yourself from becoming a victim of Medicare fraud.

What can you do to prevent Medicare Fraud?

► Do not give your Medicare number to strangers.
► Check your medical statements routinely for services not received.
► Report Medicare fraud to the Senior Medicare Patrol 855-613-7080.

Member Questions

Previous issues have included responses to questions from members. We want to encourage all members to share questions or concerns of interest to CCRC residents. Is there an issue at your community or an experience of your residents (positive or otherwise) that other CCRCs would benefit from knowing about?

Questions or items of interest related to CCRC resident matters may be sent to: Margaret Griffin, info@calcra.org, or 1515 Shasta Dr., #1401, Davis, CA 95616.