

the Educator



A monthly publication of HCA Education and Research

www.hca-nys.org

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Watch for this postcard in the mail!



Join us on July 20th for the **Supervision Plus™ Training Session** for all Home Care Supervisors and Managers Being held at Dave & Busters in New York City.

Session will be held from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Pre-registration is required. Register Today Online!

Caring for Patients under Extreme Heat Conditions

By Mandy Fallon

Heat conditions are considered extreme when the mercury rises 10 degrees above normal temperature. In metropolitan areas, these conditions are exacerbated by the large number of buildings and roadways.

Does your agency have a plan for employees and patients under extreme heat conditions? A document entitled "*Extreme Summer Heat: Tips for Service Providers who work with Special Needs Individuals,*" from the New York City Office of Emergency Management (NYC OEM), details extreme heat risk factors and how service providers, such as home care agencies, can help patients prepare for extreme heat conditions. The document is available at:

http://homecareprepare.org/files/NYC_OEM_Extreme_Heat_Tips.pdf

Heat wave conditions can cause a number of illnesses that are particularly dangerous to the elderly. Beyond sunburn, more serious heat-related illnesses include heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

- Heat cramps appear in the form of muscle pain or spasms and impact individuals who sweat a lot during strenuous activities. Restricting any strenuous activity to a cooler period of the day is a good way to avoid this illness.
- Heat exhaustion is a major concern for elderly patients, especially those with high blood pressure, as the high heat causes an individual's body to lose an excessive amount of water and salt.
- Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness that occurs when the body loses the ability to regulate temperature. Body heat rises quickly and the individual does not sweat, due to the failure of one's sweating mechanism.

To prevent heat-related illness, providers must have a plan in place to be sure that patients' homes or apartments are suitably prepared to keep cool. Patients should be encouraged to draw the shades

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Air Conditioner Coverage Continued under LTHHCP

HCA has confirmed with the state Department of Health (DOH) an important coverage provision that may be critical to patient care and safety, and prevention of morbidity and hospitalization, available under the Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP).

With the onset of high summer temperatures, HCA wants to ensure that all LTHHCP providers are aware that, under the waiver service "Environmental Modifications," formerly "Housing Improvements," local social services districts may continue to authorize portable window or portable floor unit air conditioners in those LTHHCP cases where: a medical need is documented in physician's orders, it is for the sole use of the LTHHCP, and when it fits in the participant's budget.

This issue was raised by LTHHCP providers during HCA's Statewide LTHHCP Forum meeting on May 4 in Albany. During the Forum, DOH officials agreed to check and confirm air conditioner coverage under this service. Since the Forum, and as summer's higher temperatures have continued to set in and become a natural concern in patient care, LTHHCPs have further inquired on the status of air conditioner coverage.

HCA appreciates the Department's affirmative policy and support on this important LTHHCP service and patient care component.

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or drapes in the morning to prevent additional light and heat from entering their home through the windows. They should also turn on air conditioners on days that weather forecasters predict high temperatures.

For those without air conditioners, staff should suggest an alternative place during the hottest points in the day such as a family member or neighbor's home or a cooling center. Family members and caregivers are urged to check in on patients during periods of extreme heat conditions and should report any concerns back to your agency.

Encouraging your staff to understand the basics of extreme heat and heat illness is very important, especially for those who travel between patients' homes on a daily basis or who may be required to work within a warm environment such as a patient's home without air conditioning.

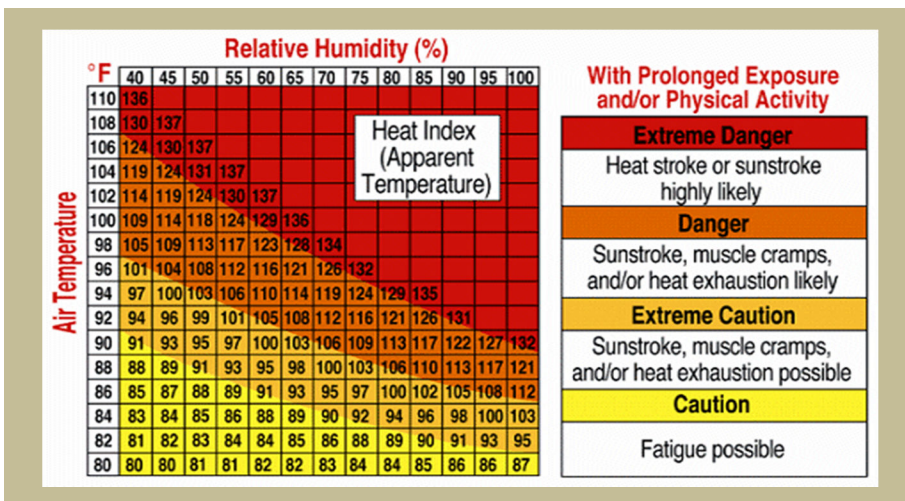
The graphic below, courtesy of the National Weather Service, illustrates how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to air temperature. In cases where individuals have to be outside during the daylight hours, it is important to take precautions to stay cool, as exposure to direct sunlight can increase the heat index by 15 degrees, making it feel even hotter.

Recommendations for home health staff to avoid extreme heat exposure

When heat exposure cannot be avoided, your staff should take the following steps to prevent heat-related illness:

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton and avoid wearing non-breathing synthetic clothing.
- If possible, stay out of the sun. When in the sun, wear sunscreen (at least SPF 15) and a hat to protect your face and head.
- Avoid strenuous activity, especially during the sun's peak hours – from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you must engage in strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, usually in the morning between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m.
- Take more breaks from extreme heat and humidity by regularly taking refuge in shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty and avoid drinks with caffeine and large amounts of sugar.
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Monitor your physical condition for signs of heat-related illness.

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Fast Facts – Extreme Heat Illness and the Elderly

- In a normal year, approximately 175 Americans die from extreme heat. Young children, elderly people and those who are sick or overweight are most at risk.
- Because men sweat more than women, men are more susceptible to heat illness. They become more quickly dehydrated.
- Sunburn can significantly slow the skin's ability to release excess heat.
- People living in urban areas may be at a greater risk from the effects of a prolonged heat wave than people living in rural regions. An increased health problem can occur when stagnant atmospheric conditions trap pollutants in urban areas, thus adding contaminated air to excessively hot temperatures.

Blackouts and rolling power outages

Often, heat emergencies are coupled with power outages. Brown outs occur as a result of spikes in energy use because of the increased use of air conditioners. Power outages come along with their own set of safety concerns for your patients and your staff. The best way for your agency to be prepared is to plan for extreme heat along with other summer hazards, such as violent weather, when creating or updating your agency's emergency plan.

Mandy Fallon is HCA's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. She can be reached at mfallon@hcanys.org.



New Survey Protocols Challenge Providers

By Trish Tulloch

CMS has released the revised State Operations Manual (SOM) with updated protocols for conducting home health agency surveys to determine compliance with home health Conditions of Participation (CoPs).

Surveyors are required to use these guidelines when assessing agency compliance with all federal regulations. The updated protocols are effective May 1, 2011 and can be accessed at: https://www.cms.gov/OASIS/10_Training.asp

Revisions impact survey processes

Surveyors are directed to be data driven, with an increased use of CMS OASIS-C outcome reports to drive the selection of home visits and clinical record reviews.

- Surveys will have a patient-outcome-oriented focus, with less emphasis on structure and minimal review of non-clinical record documentation such as policies and procedures.

- Surveyors are directed to increase information gathering from interviewing agency staff.
- Providers should expect an increased number of home visits.
- Providers should also expect an increased number of surveyors for routine surveys.

Standard survey guidance

CMS identifies nine of the fifteen CoPs as the highest level of priority standards (Level 1) most closely associated with the agency's ability to provide high quality patient care.

Surveyors are directed to proceed to a partial extended survey when a standard level non-compliant finding is identified.

The Bottom Line: Agency trends are no longer needed to identify an agency standard level citation. *A single problematic finding with an actual or potential outcome for a Level 1 standard would support noncompliance with a standard tag and may trigger an extended survey process.*

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More guidance for standard or condition level deficiencies

CMS offers a complex matrix of Level 1 standards that, in combination with other standard level deficiencies, could lead to a *condition level deficiency*. Some examples illustrate this revised survey application:

- Patient Rights (484.10): If an agency is out of compliance with investigating complaints (G107) or advising the patient of their right to participate in care planning (G109), then consider a *condition level deficiency* for Patient Rights (484.10).
- Skilled Nursing Services (484.30): If an agency is out of compliance with three of the seven Level 1 tags or one Level 1 tag plus two additional tags within this condition, consider a *condition level deficiency* for Skilled Nursing (484.30). These tags (G170-G177) include the provision of services based on the Plan of Care, including the revision of the Plan of Care with patient changes, as well as the coordination of all care and services.

Updated interpretive guidelines in Appendix B: Part II

Appendix B: Part II of the SOM highlights expanded probes to determine agency compliance with each standard and addresses revised regulations, including the therapy reassessment requirements. (For example, does the therapist document the patient's progress toward goals and outcomes appropriately?)

Prepare your agency for revised survey protocols

To prepare your agency for the revised survey protocols, consider the following tips:

- Access the revised protocols and surveyor worksheets.
- Review revised protocols with agency leadership.
- Modify current agency monitoring activities to include oversight of vital agency practices including the revised 2011 PPS updates.

- Ensure that agency staff are aware of revised protocols and their roles in upcoming surveys.
- Participate in available programs to integrate survey protocols into agency practices.
- Access the CMS archived Survey Webinar at: <https://webinar.cms.hhs.gov/hhasurvey/>.
- Stay tuned for RBC's upcoming Survey Protocols Webinar by checking our website at <http://education.rbclimited.com/store.php>.

Trish Tulloch is a Senior Consultant for RBC Limited, a national health care and management consulting firm in Staatsburg, New York. Please address all questions and comments to Trish at educator@hcany.org.



Columbia University Holds Conference on Home Health Care Worker Safety

The Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Home Health Care Health and Safety recently sponsored a conference focusing on emerging occupational and patient safety issues in home health care.

The conference brought together academic researchers, representatives of home health care, home care providers, union representatives and government agencies for an open discussion of how to apply concepts learned from facilities to the home health care setting. Presentations included current research, forums analyzing research gaps, and panel presentations representative of different perspectives on home health care issues.

Beyond the need for and importance of worker education, one of the primary factors identified was that of the correlation between worker and patient safety in the home. **Robyn Gershon**, DrPH, MHS and Professor of Sociomedical Sciences at the Mailman School presented preliminary results of a research project that developed a safety assessment tool for use by home health aides. In cooperation with their employing home care agencies, aides were trained in the use of the assessment tool, and worked with patients and their families to identify and resolve safety issues in the home.

During the conference, HCA Vice President for Policy and Clinical Affairs **Lexi Silver** was formally recognized by Columbia University for her contribution to the field of home health care health and safety.

Ms. Silver worked closely with Dr. Gershon and her staff in designing the safety assessment tool and is one of the co-authors of an article "Safety in the Home Healthcare Sector: Development of a New Household Safety Checklist" that will be published in the *Journal of Patient Safety*. Ms. Silver was given a certificate of recognition for her work with Columbia University.

Alexis Silver New Chair of ATA Home Telehealth and Remote Monitoring Group

Alexis Silver, HCA's Vice President of Policy and Clinical Affairs, has been appointed Chair of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) Home Telehealth and Remote Monitoring Special Interest Group (SIG).

In her role, Ms. Silver will oversee all education and policy efforts related to ATA's advocacy in support of home telehealth and remote monitoring. Ms. Silver replaces the previous chair, Bonnie Britton of the Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center in Ahoskie, NC.

During the ATA Annual Meeting held recently in Tampa, FL, Ms. Silver planned and facilitated a day-long session entitled "Advancing Telehealth and Remote Monitoring under Health Care Reform." Joining Ms. Silver as presenters were **HCA members Bridget Gallagher of Jewish Home Lifecare** and **Laurie Neander of At Home Care**.

One of ATA's 11 special interest groups, the Home Telehealth and Remote Monitoring SIG was established in 1999 to support the expansion and utilization of telehealth, remote monitoring and disease management applications in the patient's place of residence and includes an international membership of both public and private home care and telehealth providers, hospitals, physicians, and others interested in promoting and supporting home telehealth and remote monitoring. Given the emphasis on home monitoring under federal health care reform initiatives, the Home Telehealth and Remote Monitoring SIG will be an important contributor to state and federal policy initiatives as well as to the support and development of provider programs.

Established in 1993 as a non-profit organization and headquartered in Washington, DC, ATA is a trade association and advocate promoting the use of advanced remote medical technologies. ATA and its membership work to fully integrate telemedicine into health care systems to improve quality, equity and affordability of health care throughout the world. Membership in the Association is open to individuals, health care institutions, companies and other organizations with an interest in promoting the development and utilization of telemedicine.

HCA Education and Research Presents Its First Scholarship

At the recent Annual Membership Conference on May 22 to 24 in Saratoga Springs, HCA paid tribute to the first recipient of the HCA Education and Research Scholarship. The honor went to **Kevin Jones**, LPN of Lourdes at Home of Vestal.

HCA's 2011 Education Committee developed the award criteria, which includes acceptance or enrollment in a school or continuing education program that offers courses or a curriculum to assist the student in his or her education endeavors as well as a nomination by an administrator or executive officer of the applicant's employer. In addition, applicants had to write a narrative on why they would like to further their career in home health.

Mr. Jones has been accepted in the BSN program at Binghamton University Decker School of Nursing where he is planning to become an RN and will continue to focus on home health care. Kevin joined Lourdes at Home right out of LPN school, where he was Valedictorian. **Kim Cook**, RN, BSN and Quality Manager at Lourdes said: "We never hired a nurse right out of school before and Kevin has exceeded our expectations. Kevin is our telehealth champion, too. He promotes the program with staff, physicians and patients, keeping our monitors at 99 percent usage and maintains a continuously low acute care re-hospitalization rate." Lourdes at Home was recently recognized at the National Magnet Nursing Conference for its telehealth program and for efforts that succeeded in reducing hospitalizations.

Mr. Jones also holds a Bachelor's degree in Communications in Television. With the support of his family (his wife is also a nurse) and his

supervisors at Lourdes – including Ms. Cook and Rochelle Eggelton, Director of Home Health at Lourdes at Home – he decided to enroll in the RN program.

"I am a people person. Nursing is my calling. I want to make a difference in people's lives and I enjoy helping people solve their health problems," said Kevin. He added: "I am humbled by this award and appreciate the financial support as I pursue my goal."

HCA thanks the Education Committee for its work on this scholarship criteria and selection. Members include Committee Chair **Rae Szymanski**, Executive Vice President/ COO, VNA Hudson Valley; **Allen Rosen**, Administrator of Home Care, YAI Home Health Services; **Ann Frisch**, Executive Director, HHC-Health and Home Care; **Anne Calvo**, Administrator/Director, Patient Services, Winthrop University Hospital Home Health Agency; **Dianna D'Amico**, Director, Quality Management/Education, Montefiore Medical Center Home Health Agency; **Ginger Hall**, Director, Patient Services, Jefferson County Public Health Service; **Karen O'Kane**, Vice President, Continuing Care, Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical CHHA; **Lauren Huber**, Staff Development/Nurse Educator, Hebrew Hospital Home Inc. LTHHCP; **Mary Jean McKeveny**, Nurse Educator, Dominican Sisters Family Health Service, Inc., **Vivian Torres-Suarez**, VP, Children and Family Services, Visiting Nurse Service of New York Home Care.

HCA also thanks those who have advertised in *The Educator* since its inception, as this revenue is devoted entirely towards the scholarship. HCA encourages all organizations to consider advertising in *The Educator* –

an important opportunity to raise awareness about your product or service and to support career advancement in home health at the same time.

In addition to the Education and Research Scholarship, HCA presented our yearly awards to several other individuals who make a difference in home care, including: **Elsie Soto**, RN, Visiting Nurse Service of New York, winner of the Caring Award; **Laura Radensky**, Community Relations and Legislative Liaison for the Community Services Division of Jewish Home Lifecare System, and HCA Board Chair **Bridget Gallagher**, Senior Vice President of Community Services at Jewish Home Lifecare, who both received the Advocacy Award; **Bert Brodsky**, Founder and Chairman of Sandata, who received the Vendor Advocacy Recognition Award; and **Vicky Hines**, President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Service of Rochester and Monroe County and Immediate Past Board Chair, winner of the Ruth F. Wilson Award.

To learn more about all of our award winners, please check out the awards program at <http://www.hca-nys.org/HCA2011AwardsProgram.pdf>.

HCA congratulates all of the award winners for making a difference for the patients in home care across New York State.



Inland Flooding – What can you do?

- When you hear hurricane, think inland flooding.
- Determine whether you live in a potential flood zone.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Keep abreast of road conditions through the news media.
- Move to a safe area before access is cut off by flood water.
- Do not attempt to cross flowing water; as little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- Develop a flood emergency action plan.
- Have flood insurance. Flood damage is not usually covered by insurance. Do not make assumptions. Check your policy.

Summer Storm Preparedness: Protecting Patients and Caregivers

By Mandy Fallon

Warmer weather brings natural hazards such as hurricanes and other violent storms. As a home care provider, it is essential to have plans in place so that you can meet your patients' needs during and after a disaster.

Early predictions by the *National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center* (see graphic on next page) suggest an active hurricane season for the Atlantic. With this in mind, it is important for home care emergency planners to have preparedness plans ready to address hurricanes and their associated hazards which, in New York State, include high winds, flooding, storm surge in low lying coastal areas and tornadoes.

Has your agency completed a hazard assessment? While storm surge is a concern to New York's coastal areas, inland flooding may be the concern of agencies located in more rural portions of the state.

Types of hurricane hazards:

- Storm surge is an abnormal rise of water generated by a massive storm above normal tidal predictions that can cause extreme flooding in coastal areas.
- Inland flooding is caused by extremely heavy rainfall, most often from rain caused by weaker storms that may stall over an area.
- High winds created by hurricanes tend to diminish in wind speed within 12 hours after landfall.
- Tornadoes can be produced during a hurricane. These tornadoes tend to be less intense than those occurring in the Midwest and unpredictable when spawned from a hurricane.

Many of these hazards cause similar consequences such as power loss, transportation service interruptions and property damage. Emergency planners need to account for the storms' aftermath when crafting emergency preparedness plans and business continuity of operations plans (COOP) to ensure that your business will be able to continue providing services to your patients.

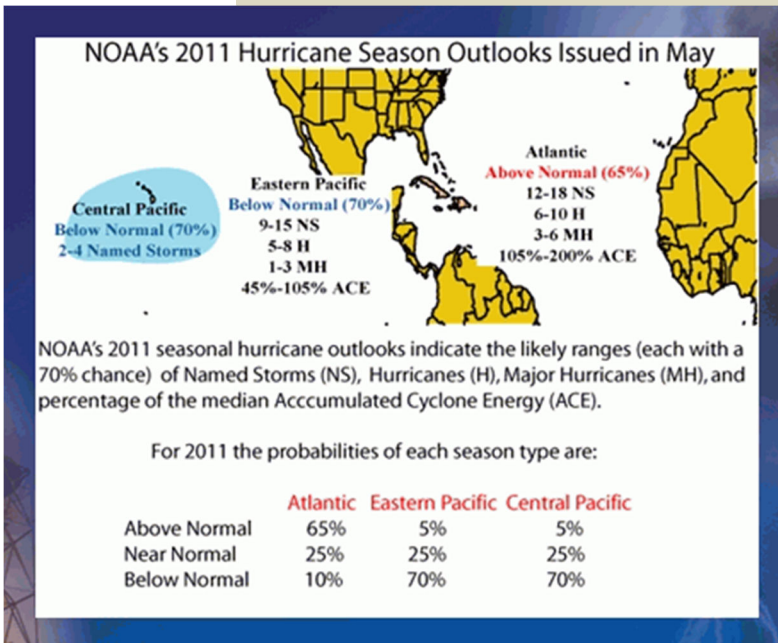
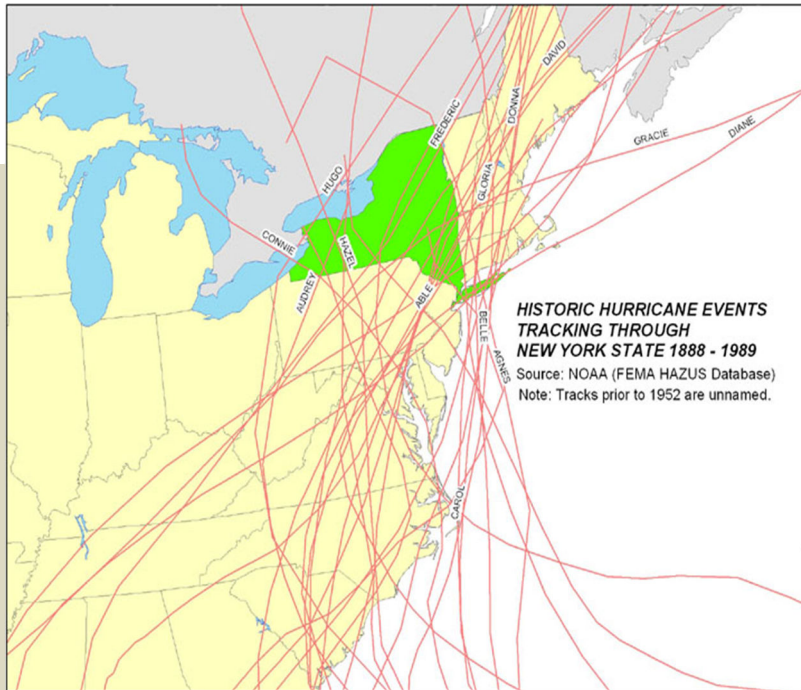
Beyond business continuity, these hazards could impact the safety and wellbeing of your patients and families. Therefore, it is important to educate your patients and their caregivers about hurricanes and associated hazards so that they will know what to do in the event of a hurricane. The New York City Office of Emergency Management offers a free downloadable brochure that can assist your patients in their planning efforts. It is available in multiple languages at http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/hurricane_guide.shtml

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Are hurricanes a problem for your region? This graphic charts 100 years of hurricanes that have had an impact on New York State.



Mark Your Calendar and Save the Dates for Upcoming HCA Signature Events

HCA is pleased to offer premier opportunities for members to learn the latest information, best practices, enhanced strategies and more at our signature events.

Signature events include the **HCA Annual Membership Conference**, which was recently held in Saratoga Springs, and the upcoming **Senior and Financial Managers Retreat** and **Quality and Technology Conference**, both coming up this fall.

Senior and Financial Managers Retreat

Online registration is now open for **HCA's Senior and Financial Managers Retreat** that will be held on September 13 and 14 at the beautiful Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz. There couldn't be a more beautiful setting to network with peers and learn from the top caliber speakers that will be on hand during this two-day conference aimed at enhancing your organization's financial outcomes.

As part of the conference agenda, HCA will, of course, provide the latest state and federal updates related to home health financial matters and we are pleased to have **William Dombi**, Vice President for Law of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) sharing NAHC's efforts in pushing for equitable federal reforms.

Provider activities related to Third Party Liability (TPL) billing will also start to gear up soon. Members of the state office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) and its contractor for TPL (UMASS) will be on hand at the conference to help providers navigate technical issues related to this process.

Bob Simione of Simione Consulting will also be on deck to provide the latest in Medicare benchmarking data, highlighting the challenges and opportunities with the 2011 and 2012 Prospective Payment System (PPS), and much more.

To register, visit
<https://www.eventville.com/Catalog/EventRegistration1.asp?EventId=1007890>.

Quality and Technology Conference

Another beneficial, information packed event will be the **HCA Quality and Technology Conference** on November 2 and 3 in Troy. This conference will support member efforts in enhancing patient outcomes and employee satisfaction and improving organizational performance and processes.

The focus of this conference is on: how to make the most of your operation amid tight resources; quality benchmarking standards; enhanced patient care; and successful quality improvement projects initiated by HCA members. Day two of the conference will focus on how organizations can accelerate their telehealth expertise. Watch for details coming up this summer and be sure to save the date to attend.

First rate learning doesn't end with HCA's signature events. We host, plan and organize a number of education programs including the **Northeast Home Health Leadership Summit** in Boston on January 17 to 19, 2012. HCA is pleased to once again serve as coordinator of this top-tier conference.

The Summit, a collaboration between the eight northeastern home care associations, features nationally recognized speakers in an effort to enhance the leadership skills of home health and hospice leaders in this new environment of care. Last year, more than 250 executives attended the event, now in its tenth year.

Complete details about the Summit will be available this summer, as will information about exclusive Sponsorship opportunities, all posted to the Summit website at <http://www.nhomehealthsummit.com/>.

Please mark your calendar now and join us at these conferences designed expressly for you!

September 13-14: HCA's Senior and Financial Managers Retreat – New Paltz
November 2-3: HCA's Quality and Technology Conference – Troy
January 17-19: Northeast Home Health Leadership Summit – Boston



Education Update

Scheduled Learning Opportunities

June 14 – Webinar
Being Culturally Sensitive to the Dying Patient/Family for Hospice Aides

June 15 & 16 – Albany
Blueprint for OASIS Accuracy – COS-C Exam on June 17

June 28 – Webinar Series – Jo Manion
The Leader as Coach: Positive Principles for Transforming Your Workplace

July 20 – New York City – Tim Ashe, Fazzi Associates
Supervision/Plus™

August 16-17 – Bayside
Blueprint for OASIS Accuracy – COS-C Exam on August 18

August 23, August 30 and September 30 – Webinars
ICD-9-CM Coding Fundamentals for the Beginner Coder

September 13-14 – New Paltz
HCA Senior and Financial Managers Retreat

September 15 – Webinar – Patricia Tulloch, RBC, Ltd.
ICD-9-CM Code Updates: Prepare Now for Required Fall Changes

September 22 – Albany – Arnie Cisneros, Home Health Strategic Management
Strategies and Tools for Rehabilitation Programming and Documentation

September 27 – Nanuet – Patricia Tulloch, RBC Limited
ICD-9-CM & OASIS Coding Back to Basics and Beyond HCS-D Exam – September 28

November 2-3 – Troy
Quality & Technology Conference – A Signature Event

Visit www.hcanys.org/events.cfm for weekly updates on learning opportunities.
(Brochures are available for all programs.)

For more information on any of these webinars, programs or events, contact Lynda Schoonbeek at (518) 810-0656 or email her at lschoonbeek@hcanys.org.



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Submitting an Article

*Interested in submitting an article for an upcoming issue of *The Educator*?*

The editors are looking for non-commercial articles on topics that inform readers about ways they can save time and money and enhance patient care at their organizations.

Submitting an Article Idea

Please fill out an article submission form prior to writing your piece. If your idea is selected, we will provide you with the guidelines for preparing your article. Just contact us at educator@hcanys.org to receive the submission form, and you could be headed toward achieving recognition as one of our authors.

Placing an Ad

To reach HCA members about a product, service or potential employment opportunity, we invite members, associates and friends to place advertising in this publication. Just contact us at educator@hcanys.org or Lynda Schoonbeek at lschoonbeek@hcanys.org. In keeping with our educational mission, all advertising monies will go towards scholarships for HCA member employees who want to further their career education in home health. Scholarships will be awarded at the HCA Annual Conference on May 22-24 in Saratoga Springs.

Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting article ideas and advertising in the next issue of *The Educator* is: **July 15.**

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