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Abolishing the Companionship Exemption: Good Intentions but Harmful Results
By Lisa Yarkony
The U.S. Department of Labor recently issued a new rule which they said would help both patients and home care workers. The reality is that it will do neither. Both States and the Federal government will have a difficult time paying for overtime payments as will individuals from workers who are precluded in spending more than 20 percent of their time in hands on personal care. The result: more part time rather than full time workers, jobs being divided and patients losing the valued continuity of being cared for daily by a person with whom they are comfortable. While overall costs will rise, there will be no increase in productivity. Administrative costs from hiring, training and supervising more part time people will skyrocket while caregivers may wind up receiving less money in the end. Most who speak for the disabled were originally enthusiastic about this new rule but now oppose it because of the unintended negative consequences.

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Toward a National Policy on Long Term Care & Statement to the Commission on Long Term Care
By Val J. Halamandaris
The Commission had barely six Months to Do their Work. They made many reasonable recommendations including removing the “homebound” requirement which is one of the preconditions to qualifying for Medicare home care. However, they did not have unanimous agreement nor could they agree on how to pay for the long term care program based on home care that everyone agreed is necessary. The open questions: Will the Commission’s Report accelerate action within the Congress to solve what many regard of greatest threat to American Democracy? And which path will Congress choose: care and veneration of the elderly until the end of their days, abandonment and neglect of the infirm elderly or euthanasia?

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Highlights of the 2013 Financial Managers Conference
The conference was a success that paved the way for NAHC’s Annual Meeting. It focused on issues that concern agency CEOs and CFOs as they plan their budgets for 2014. Much time went to discussions of a new rule from CMS to rebase Medicare home health reimbursement. Based on a sketchy analysis, CMS imposed a cut of 14 percent over four years, the maximum allowed by law. This adds up to an additional $22 billion in cuts to the Medicare home care benefit. NAHC President Val J. Halamandaris in his Keynote Speech opening the meeting called this “The attempted dismantling of the Medicare home care benefit.” He noted that if this cut is allowed to remain intact it will drive the total cuts directed at the home care industry to more than $100 billion from 2009 through 2017. It is unconscionable to place this level of cuts on what was in 2009 a $17 billion industry crippling the very infrastructure that the nation needs to address the growing long term care problems of the aging boomers said Halamandaris. He announced plans to enlist the help of Congress in withdrawing this confiscatory rule. Other issues discussed at the conference included:

- What do home care industry leaders expect from the future? The answer, in short, was a great deal. Despite new regulations, they were upbeat about the possibilities offered by new technology and the opportunities to work with hospitals, insurance companies, and physicians.

- How do leaders of health care systems envision home care’s role in the future? It’s bright according to the prominent leaders who spoke. They stressed the importance of using data, instead of anecdotes, in making a case for home care as a valuable partner.

- What are the advantages of care integration and network models? The conclusion was that shared risk and rewards, accountability and value-based purchasing are fast becoming the norms, making it advantageous for a provider to also be a health plan.

CARING is published to address the critical issues and needs of those millions of Americans who, in the words of Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, are on the fringes of life. He spoke of the millions of children facing problems in the dawn of life, he added the elderly, experiencing compound burdens in the twilight of life, and the handicapped and disabled, whom he said were in the shadows of life. CARING is dedicated to the belief that there is no problem experienced by humanity that cannot be solved. Moreover, it posits that the solution to most human problems lies in the love, understanding, and caring of one human being for another. As one of its major themes, CARING is committed to advancing the proposition that as much as is humanly possible, health care and supportive services should be delivered in the home. Home health care and hospice both serve to keep families together, and CARING is wholeheartedly committed to advancing this most important social value.
What's new with hospice? The consensus among the experts who spoke is that Medicare and Medicaid will continue to keep an eye on hospice for the next few years. In these tough times, hospices need to conduct themselves like businesses and have control over their data.

What are the latest trends in Medicaid and what are the changes ahead? There's a growing move for states to turn the management of their Medicaid plans over to managed care plans. These plans have little experience with Medicaid services or Medicare-Medicaid dual eligible, opening the door for home care providers to become their valued partners.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2013 NAHC ANNUAL MEETING

42 Things You Will Want to Do in Washington, DC

As usual, NAHC's Annual Meeting will offer workshops on everything that concerns home care and hospice providers. We also invite you to join us as we march on Capitol Hill, honor the world's most caring people, and enjoy a festive Halloween party. Best of all is our lineup of celebrated speakers: bestselling author Tom Rath, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and customer service expert Chip Bell.

Officers and Leaders of NAHC's 14 Affiliates

Encourage Participation in the NAHC Annual Meeting

Read postcards from the heart of home care. They come from members of NAHC's board and leaders of its affiliates nationwide. They know this is a critical year for our industry as we face a long list of issues: the threat of rebasing, the employer mandate, and the end of the companionship exemption. They urge you to come to Washington this fall. Together we can make a difference in Congress and protect the millions of patients who we serve.

Members, Vendors, and Suppliers Make Videos Promoting the NAHC Annual Meeting

Some two dozen of them took the time to make videos about their great experiences in previous years, and they know this year will live up to their expectations for education, entertainment, and the chance to network with peers. You can also hear what they have to say by going to NAHC's website — or joining them at the Annual Meeting this year.

A Guided Tour of the Nation's Capital: Site of the 2013 NAHC Annual Meeting

By Val J. Halamandaris

You could get a guidebook but for an insider's view of Washington, DC, turn to NAHC President Val J. Halamandaris. A longtime resident of the city, he tells you about the memorials and monuments that mean the most to him. He shares personal thoughts about the Lincoln Memorial and the Library of Congress, places that played a special role for him when he first came to DC as an aspiring young attorney. He'll tell you where to go shopping, where to enjoy the best steak — and why this is the best time to visit Washington, DC.

Understanding Medicare Premiums

Ron Pollack

BEST PRACTICES: ALZHEIMER'S & DEMENTIA

Alzheimer's in those with Down's syndrome

By Verna Benner Carson

Make Your Service Monogrammed

By Chip R. Bell