Plan Now for AMDA’s Virtual Reunion

Registration is now open for PALTC21, the Virtual Annual Conference of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine on March 11–14. This family reunion for PALTC practitioners everywhere offers leading experts discussing the topics on everyone’s minds as well as cutting-edge research, with many opportunities to connect and interact.

The program will hit the ground running with the President’s Address from David A. Nace, MD, MPH, CMD. That will be followed by a panel discussion on COVID-19 in PALTC, said Rollin Wright, MD, MPH, MS, chair of the Annual Conference Program Planning Subcommittee. This kick-off session on long-term services and supports — “COVID-19 and LTSS Reform Priorities and Possibilities” — will be moderated by Joanne Lynn, MD, and will feature the national thought leaders Vincent Mor, PhD; Sharon A. Branigan, MD; and Jennie Chin-Hansen, MS. “It will explore clinical, epidemiologic, and research issues related to COVID, but it will go beyond that to address the socioeconomic, social justice, ageism, and other perspectives that are playing out in our long-term care communities,” Dr. Wright noted.

For those who want more COVID-related information, there is an entire track dedicated to the pandemic. “There’s something in every time slot on COVID,” said Dr. Wright. Among the pandemic-focused sessions:

• Pandemic Ethics: Addressing Health Care Disparities in PALTC
• Transitions of Care COVID-19 and Beyond: Ethics and Technology
• International Response to COV-19 in LTC Settings
• Telehealth Strategies to Reduce Readmissions, Mitigate Infection Risk, and Conserve PPE — A COVID-19 Case
• Flu, COVID-19, and Respiratory Outbreak: A Pound of Care
• Health Care Leadership in the COVID-19 Era

Beyond COVID-19, the program is chock full of issues from telemedicine/technology, advance care planning, and oral care to the latest PALTC research, cross-cultural care, quality improvement, and LTC leadership. The popular Saturday session on public policy will provide regulatory and legislative updates, including what to expect for health care and, specifically, PALTC in the Biden administration, “The whole program is a huge nod to everything that everyone’s been going through since last March,” said Dr. Wright. “We want to keep people up to date and get them ahead of the curve, as well as fill any gaps in knowledge.”

The program will feature several opportunities for participants to interact and engage with the presenters. For instance, at the Meet the Experts Breakfast, Robert Arnold, DM, FAAPHM, will look at two cases of having difficult conversations with patients and families, and there will be an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and share their thoughts and insights.

Dr. Wright said, “We showed last March that we can do a national conference via video. We have worked to make this one even more easily accessible and practical. Participants can sign on, view a session or two, then sign off and immediately implement what they learned.” At the same time, she observed, “If you have a real-time situation befuddling you in the morning, you can seek an answer or solution in an afternoon session. This is a unique opportunity.”

In many ways, Dr. Wright suggested, the virtual program is more intimate. “The presenters are right there in front of you. It feels like a fireside chat with them.” The planning subcommittee has thought of every little detail. For instance, most programs don’t start until after 9:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time to accommodate participants in various time zones. There also will be a “huge [information technology] team” working behind the scenes to keep the program moving smoothly.

Go to the special conference website at https://www.eventscribe.com/2021/PALT21/ for more information and make plans now to connect — virtually — with your Society family in March.

Spotlight on Policy: Will the Election Change PALTC Practices?

With 2020 now over — thank goodness — the thinking now shifts to what the rest of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic world will look like. In the midst of unpredictable change due to the pandemic, there also will be a changeover in the White House and the federal agencies. That means there will be a new secretary for the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) as well as a new administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Another thing that is certain is the practice of PALTC will change. It is unlikely that anything in the path toward value-based care will be altered in a serious way, but it’s clear that the pandemic exposed the worst weaknesses of PALTC. From staffing shortages to resource issues and beyond, it became clear that PALTC needs support and to be treated as an equal in our health care system if it is to respond as an equal during this time of crisis. If we are to build on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) — assuming it survives its challenge in the Supreme Court — its success largely stems from saving money by reducing health care inefficiencies such as rehospitalizations. Two-sided risk models need to be bolstered so that the “cost” of the ACA is paid for as was predicted by the Congressional Budget Office when the ACA was passed. In some ways then, the system is as strong as its weakest link—in this case it seems to be that the oversight of PALTC and the punitive approach has created that weakest link.

Will this reality push the next administration to make changes within payment models to include PALTC? That is possible. We already heard comments within the current administration that the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) needed a new direction — one that hopefully includes PALTC as an equal rather than an afterthought.

We already see more practices in direct contracting and Accountable Care Organization (ACO)-type arrangements. We likely will see a continuation of that and a bit of a competition in terms of recruiting PALTC practices that are no longer able to stay in fee for service on their own. The pandemic may accelerate their decision to join a value-based arrangement model for the right price. On the advocacy side, as more in PALTC enter these arrangements, we will have to make sure that quality measures, benchmarks, and all other pitfalls are addressed.

It’s clear that there are many scenarios that could still play out.

News from the Society

Don’t Miss These Events

January 23, 2021
Alabama Medical Directors Association Mid-Winter Conference
Birmingham, AL (or virtually) Website: https://almda.org/page/upcoming-events-1

January 27, 2021
Webinar: What’s in Your Medical Director Agreement? Negotiating the Terms and Understanding Key Provisions
Website: https://apex.paltc.org/page/live-webinars

February 10, 2021
Webinar: COVID Response Analysis: A Process for Post-Event Review
Website: https://apex.paltc.org/page/live-webinars

February 24, 2021
Webinar: Advance Care Planning in Long-Term Care: How to Make it Work for You!
Website: https://apex.paltc.org/page/live-webinars

March 10, 2021
Pre-Conference Workshop: Pragmatic Trials to Improve Care and Outcomes for Persons with Dementia in Long-Term Care
Website: https://paltc.org/annual-conference

March 11-14, 2021
AMDA 2021 Virtual Annual Conference
Website: https://paltc.org/annual-conference

March 24, 2021
Webinar: Telemedicine in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Facilities – Lessons Learned from COVID-19 Website: https://apex.paltc.org/page/live-webinars

April 7, 2021
Webinar: Ethical and Logistical Considerations to Achieving Safe, Effective, and Compassionate Quarantine of Older Adults with Dementia in Nursing Homes Website: https://apex.paltc.org/page/live-webinars

May 5, 2021
Webinar: A Comprehensive Approach to Enhancing the Well-Being of Nursing Home Residents Living with Dementia Website: https://apex.paltc.org/page/live-webinars

May 7-8, 2021
Nursing Home Research International Conference Leiden, The Netherlands Website: https://nursing-home-research.com/

March 10-13, 2022
AMDA 2022 Annual Conference Baltimore, MD Website: https://paltc.org/annual-conference