A n important way the Foundation for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care (PALTC) Medicine advances its mission is by embracing and nurturing collaborative partnerships between practitioners and industry partners, both striving for better care for the patients and families we serve. We commend our Industry Advisory Board (IAB) members and highlight here how their support of your Foundation efforts fund many of our key initiatives.

We believe that PALTC medicine is a unique specialty — we practice in settings unlike any others and in a medically complex older population. Clinical practice in PALTC is not taught in medical schools nor in clinical rotations. It is learned instead through extensive experience, informed by AMDA — The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine training. Recognizing this, the Foundation partners with IAB members to provide insights into PALTC medication and clinical practice issues to discern what information matters to PALTC clinicians regarding medication options. Why is this important? Over the years we have observed pharmaceutical companies offer beneficial products that did not reach their potential or even failed due to misunderstandings of patient needs or the clinicians involved or inability to reach those clinicians with the crucial information that matters in PALTC care.

The Foundation has demystified PALTC to IAB members through presentations at face-to-face meetings both during the Society’s Annual Conference and throughout the year. We provide specific contacts with practicing Society members and its knowledgeable staff so information is only a phone call away.

Don Pouliot, regional account director of PALTC with Sunovion Pharmaceuticals, shared, “Over the last five years, the Industry Advisory Board for AMDA has allowed us to gather experts in multiple disciplines to better understand how we can serve patients/residents all along the growing geriatric care continuum. As senior care has evolved, we have been able to evolve along with it. The IAB team has consistently delivered value to Sunovion in building national and local relationships.”

Susan Manganello, the lead for public affairs and patient advocacy with Sanofi’s U.S. Vaccines unit, offered, “Sanofi has been a member of the IAB since its inception. Important discussions around management of conditions with a specific lens to the frail elderly in post-acute and senior care have taken place in these meetings. These conversations have been valuable as we all work together to take care of the aging population.”

The Foundation currently funds initiatives in education and training, workforce development, clinical resources, and research efforts. We are promoting a better understanding of the uniqueness of the PALTC setting.

Perhaps the crucial issue of our time is the growing shortage of experienced, trained staff across all PALTC settings. The availability of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, therapists, and other disciplines has reached a crisis point. The Foundation is addressing this need with funds developed from the support of IAB members and our membership.

To date the Foundation has invested over $1mm in the Futures Program and has worked with more than 1,300 clinicians.

The crown jewel of the effort to increase the supply of clinicians is the Futures Program. This one-of-a-kind effort brings in remarkable individuals from medicine, nursing, therapy, and pharmacy training programs during the Society’s Annual Conference. They have a specific day of training in PALTC, meet with current practicing peers, and are matched with mentors with whom they interact for as long as they desire as they plan a career in PALTC. The attendees are then able to attend all the Annual Conference presentations. To date the Foundation has invested over $1 million in this program and has worked with more than 1,300 clinicians over the twenty years of the Foundation’s existence.

Additionally, with the help of IAB members and individual donors, your Foundation is driving research by practitioners in PALTC: this year we launched an initiative to award grant funds to investigators across the country. Currently the funding proposal committee led by Dr. Barbara Zaworotz and other Society leaders is reviewing more than 25 innovative research proposals to advance how we think about and deliver care to our patients.

Integral to our shared success is developing the relationship between durable medical equipment and pharmaceutical providers and clinicians or students in training at the beginning of their careers. These relationships establish mutual respect, professionalism, and goodwill, which will bear fruit throughout their careers.

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• The implications of expanded Medicare coverage of telehealth services on beneficiary access to care and quality of care (Consolidated Appropriations Act, Pub. L. No. 117-103 [2022]).

The CAA also requires the DHHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) to issue a report by June 2023 regarding the program integrity and risks associated with Medicare telehealth services. The OIG’s report must include recommendations to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. The CAA also requires the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to begin publishing data to its website on July 1 and quarterly thereafter related to telemedicine services.

This upcoming OIG report should provide information for the provider, regulatory, and legal communities to identify areas in the requirements where improvements are needed to prevent telehealth fraud or abuse.

Telehealth and Malpractice

As with all emerging and changing health care areas, filing of malpractice actions and other litigation is often delayed after the time of service. Before the pandemic, telehealth malpractice claims were limited because of the limited scope of services that were allowed, which meant few claims were being presented to payors, both governmental and private. We should expect an increase in telehealth litigation in the next few years.

Missed or misdiagnosis is a frequent type of medical malpractice claim, and it would be expected that the telehealth claims will be no different as litigation increases in the upcoming years. Variations in the types of missed or misdiagnoses often depend on the type of medical care being rendered. A JAMA Internal Medicine article (2013;17:418–425) cited the most common conditions with a missed or misdiagnosis for primary care were pneumonia, decenituated congestive heart failure, and acute renal failure.

The types and frequency of malpractice actions being filed and significance of the settlements and jury verdicts related to telehealth visits will play out as more actions are filed and time passes as the litigation makes its way through the court systems. Insurance companies will be carefully watching when a significant wave of malpractice actions hit their radar.

The Future of Telehealth

In February 2022, the Telehealth Extension and Evaluation Act (Senate Bill 3593) was introduced in the U.S. Senate. This bipartisan legislation as drafted would extend Medicare coverage for telehealth services for two additional years after the PHE ends, allowing Congress to establish a study on the efficacy of telehealth and whether broad access should be permanent. Other bills or potential future legislation concerning telehealth will likely include safeguards to prevent misuse and to ensure that patients are receiving adequate and appropriate care based on their needs throughout the country.

Currently, all 50 states and the District of Columbia reimburse for live video services provided to beneficiaries enrolled in their Medicaid program (National Conference of State Legislatures, State Telehealth Policies, April 2022, https://bit.ly/3wN1Ne). The services, provider types, and locations eligible for reimbursement vary within state Medicaid programs. The states individually continue to refine their telehealth reimbursements as well as private payer laws on an ongoing basis. Many states plan to continue all or some of these expanded telehealth policies after the pandemic, especially insofar as they have impacted behavioral health visits.

At its peak throughout the pandemic, telehealth represented 40% of all mental health and substance abuse outpatient visits in the United States (Justin Lo et al., “Telehealth Has Played an Outsize Role Meeting Mental Health Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” Kaiser Family Foundation, March 15, 2022; https://bit.ly/3dFmCuP). Telehealth has changed the health care landscape, providing individuals with access to behavioral health services that would have otherwise required offsite transportation.

Continued to next page
Going to the EDGE of Innovation, Empowerment

A MDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine’s EDGE Symposium is back for another year of exploring practical approaches to “mending the cracks” in the PALTC system through engaging lectures, panel discussions, and facilitated small group interaction. The virtual program is set for October 28, and attendees will get practical takeaways they can apply to their practices and share with their teams and colleagues.

In announcing the first EDGE Symposium last year, Diane Sanders-Cepeda, DO, CMD, said, “Determining what issues to address and how to be forward thinking when there are so many topics, concerns, needs, and challenges demanding our attention, it is like looking over a cliff at the vastness around you and thinking about the possibilities.” She further observed, “We want to address issues that don’t normally get this kind of attention — with real dialogue.”

During this one-day program, topics will include:
- Leadership, advocacy and policy
- Ethics
- Behavioral health
- Staffing challenges
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- DIVERGENCE at the EDGE: a continuing series of debates on controversial topics in PALTC

Registration is now open at https://bit.ly/3PfH0uN. Register by August 31 and save!

Healing Together in Today’s Tragic Times

This is a difficult time for our country, with shootings leaving many victims — and their grieving families — behind. The impact of these horrific events affects us individually and collectively and is compounded by the stress of the pandemic and ongoing crises at home and abroad.

The Behavioral and Mental Health Advisory Council of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine wants to support you and your staff as we all struggle to process the accumulating trauma and how it is affecting us. As a message from the Council states, “The experience of an event and whether a person perceives it as traumatic is different for every individual. It is important to understand that trauma manifests in many ways, including emotionally... working through a potentially traumatic experience includes noticing and naming your feelings (e.g., devastation, agony, rage, confusion, vulnerability, anxiety, apathy, fatigue, and panic, to name a few). Noticing sensations within the body is essential to helping process the experience, e.g., tense, limp, closed, constricted, nervous, nauseous, or trembly.” Read the Council’s entire message at https://bit.ly/3R7Dr1F.

The Council also has helpful resources for you, including a list of secondary traumatic stress symptoms and guidelines for being more empathetic (“Principles of Trauma-Informed Care,” https://bit.ly/3yzOxL)

A New Opportunity to Network With Your Peers

A MDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine is now holding Member Open Forum discussions via Zoom every Friday at 4:00 p.m. EST; These meetings are free for all Society members. This is your chance to raise and discuss topics and issues that are important to you! Every week one of your esteemed Society colleagues will moderate the discussion. Some weeks may be themed, but others will follow the natural flow of conversation.

For more than two years, the Society has held COVID-19 State Task Force meetings every Friday to discuss issues and policy with Society leaders at the state level. The meetings have been very well received. The group now has decided to expand the scope of these conversations and to open them up to all Society members. Register now at https://profile.paltc.org/Open_Forum (login is required).

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Society clinicians and medical directors are involved in more than nursing homes. Most Society clinicians practice and serve as medical directors in hospitals, assisted living facilities, Programs for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), senior apartments, adult day care facilities, and Special Needs Plans (SNP) while maintaining an office practice. Their involvement in accountable care organizations (ACO), bundled payment plans, and other forms of alternative payment models (APM) has exponentially increased the reach of the Society’s clinician community.

We celebrate the 2022 IAB Partners, listed below, for investing and engaging in this important PALTC forum. Thank you!

We also offer gracious thanks to our volunteer IAB Program Subcommittee Members: Denise Wassenaar, RN, MSW; James Lett, MD, CMD; David Smith, MD, CMD; Dan Haimowitz, MD, CMD; Tom Hatzisoota; Frank Grosso; and Elizabeth Sobczyk, MPH, MSW.

Drs. Lett and Smith are co-chairs of the Industry Advisory Board for the Foundation for PALTC Medicine.

September 22, 2022
Roundtable Discussion: More of a Good Thing: A Framework to Grow & Strengthen the PALTC Workforce
Website: https://bit.ly/33ocOds

September 24, 2022
Excellence in Long-Term Care
Virginia Beach, VA
Email: arivera_ltc@yahoo.com

DON’T MISS THESE EVENTS

August 5-7, 2022
Georgia Medical Directors Association Summer Symposium
Savannah, GA
Website: https://bit.ly/3P4NuqG

August 8-10, 2022
TGS/TMDA Annual Conference
Sugar Land, TX
Website: https://tgsmdaconference.org/

August 18, 2022
AMDA Drive to Deprescribe Meeting
Website: https://bit.ly/3Z0sJKt

August 22, 2022
Panel Discussion: More of a Good Thing: A Framework to Grow & Strengthen the PALTC Workforce
Website: https://bit.ly/33ocOds

August 25, 2022
Roundtable Discussion: More of a Good Thing: A Framework to Grow & Strengthen the PALTC Workforce
Website: https://bit.ly/33ocOds

September 15, 2022
AMDA Drive to Deprescribe Meeting
Website: https://bit.ly/3Z0sJKt

September 22, 2022
Panel Discussion: More of a Good Thing: A Framework to Grow & Strengthen the PALTC Workforce
Website: https://bit.ly/33ocOds

September 24, 2022
Excellence in Long-Term Care
Virginia Beach, VA
Email: arivera_ltc@yahoo.com

October 6-7, 2022
CALCTM Summit for Excellence
City of Industry, CA
Website: https://www.caltcm.org/education

October 21-22, 2022
Michigan Society for PALTC Medicine Annual Conference
Lansing, MI
Website: https://bit.ly/3cvK3D

October 21-22, 2022
Wisconsin Society for PALTC Medicine Annual Conference
Madison, WI
Website: https://www.wasm.org/

October 21-23, 2022
Ohio Long Term Care Symposium
Website: https://bit.ly/3Pzc8ea

October 28, 2022
EDGE22 Virtual Symposium
Website: https://bit.ly/3z2wnon

November 3-6, 2022
FMDA: Best Care Practices in the PALTC Continuum
Website: https://www.bestcarepractices.org/

November 18-20, 2022
AMDA Virtual Fall Care Synthesis
Website: https://bit.ly/3y2OM