
As we reflect back on the year that has just passed, we hope that your membership with Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire and the American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging has continued to provide you with many of the resources, education and advocacy that you and your staff have needed as you faced almost unprecedented challenges. At the state level, you have been assured of receiving exceptional representation from the association's leadership and advocates on regulatory and legislative matters, and educational programs that address the managerial, strategic and direct care issues that are so important to providers. At the national level, AAHSA continues to be one of the most active, well-respected and forward-thinking associations in the country in support of its mission and on behalf of its thousands of provider members and those they serve.

Here are just some of the highlights of what Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire accomplished on your behalf in 2009:

- ✓ Successfully held an Annual Meeting in January, Annual Conference in May, and Leadership Forum in October, all of which offered continuing education credits and networking opportunities for members on such diverse topics as disaster planning, facility management, adaptive computer technology, the Green House® concept, stewardship, strategic planning, creating opportunities to build or expand home- and community-based services, social media, understanding and improving your CMS 5-Star rating, how providers have been impacted by the financial crisis, and more.
- ✓ Conducted, and shared results with members on, various surveys for the association and as requested by members seeking input on topics such as wage and benefits compensation, state budget implications, NH's granny tax, marketing services, consulting dietician contacts, capital needs, and the association's services.
- ✓ Increased communications with members through the monthly E-News Bulletins, timely announcements/alerts on state and national regulatory and legislative issues of importance to providers, phone calls and mailings about conferences and meetings, and information from Business Firm Members on their products and services.
- ✓ Provided opportunities for members to participate in educational teleconferences and webinars hosted by Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire and its sister association, the New York Association of Homes & Services for the Aging.
- ✓ Revised the association's web site to better reflect the mission of the association and its provider members, and included links for consumers to direct them to information about members, the not-for-profit difference, and AAHSA's tools for consumers.
- ✓ Introduced new programs, exclusively for members, including the Retirement Facility Technician certificate program, sponsored by BOMI International; a Philanthropy Collaborative, to be conducted by Davenport & Barr, to assist members in growing their fundraising programs thereby increasing an important revenue stream; and an annual Awards program to recognize long term services' individuals and providers.
- ✓ Actively participated in AAHSA State Executive and House of Delegates' meetings in order to continue to grow the working relationship and collaborative efforts with colleagues from other state affiliates as well as the national association.
- ✓ Attached you'll find reports from our two outstanding state advocacy representatives delineating the legislative and regulatory efforts and successes achieved in 2009.

NEW IN 2010

We are delighted to announce that in 2010 we will be offering some new programs and benefits for members:

- **Monthly teleconferences** for members to begin in the Spring, *at no cost*, on a variety of educational topics.
- **Leadership Councils**, in both Maine and New Hampshire, that will offer a forum for members to get together with their colleagues to talk about issues of mutual interest and concern.
- A **Professional Development Scholarship Program** that will provide scholarships to members' employees so that they may participate in educational programs offered by the association in order to learn new skills, and advance their careers and networks. The scholarships will entitle recipients (one each for Maine and New Hampshire members) to a free registration to attend each of our three conferences in 2010: the recently held Technology Forum & Annual Meeting in January; the Annual Conference in May; and the Leadership Forum in October.
- Our first-ever **Technology Forum**, held on January 21 in Portsmouth, offered two educational sessions with nationally-renowned speakers, a special luncheon keynote address, and the opportunity to meet with and see demonstrations by firms which offer technology solutions that can improve health care, preserve independence, and ensure quality of life for seniors. Based on the feedback we received from attendees, we plan to make this an annual event for providers.

AAHSA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We are very pleased to also share with you a summary of AAHSA's Accomplishments for 2009, which is enclosed. AAHSA is working diligently to fulfill its promises to its members: to inspire, to serve, and to advocate. They have provided the information and support members need to survive in the current economic and policy environments, while preparing to thrive in the future. Together with Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire, we are creating the future of aging services.

We hope that you are enjoying and taking advantage of the programs, products and services that are offered through your state and national associations, and that we may have the privilege of continuing to represent you in 2010. We are again pleased to offer our members a 5% discount for the Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire portion of dues if the enclosed invoice is paid by March 3, 2010!

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, and we always welcome your comments and suggestions, and certainly your participation, as we fulfill our mission to promote the interests of not-for profit members in Maine and New Hampshire which provide healthy, affordable and ethical long-term care to our older citizens.

Sincerely,

Rosie

Rosemary L. Goedtel
Director of Member Services & Communications
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STATE ADVOCACY

Maine (as reported by Craig Nelson of Doyle & Nelson, Augusta ME)

When looked at from a public advocacy standpoint, 2009 in Maine was a year of hard work to try to keep the doors of the many LTC provider/members of Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire open. We were finally successful in getting the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) to implement the much-awaited partial rebasing of the NF's. DHHS also included in its part of the 2009-2010 biennial state budget a reduction of MaineCare reimbursement for residential care providers which was based upon the assumption that 400-450 residential care beds would be closed. During the legislative session, we were successful in convincing DHHS that, when they looked more closely at the current residential care residents, it would be a much more difficult task than originally thought to close this number of residential care beds, so the final budget contained a delay in the implementation of this reduction to the second year of the biennium with a public statement from DHHS Commissioner Brenda Harvey that DHHS may very well have to come this winter for more funding due to its inability to close enough residential care beds.

We also successfully defended against a set of state policies which would have resulted in a significant shift of future MaineCare funding from residential-based care to home-based care. On this issue we have also actively been participating in the ongoing effort by DHHS to develop a new set of residential care eligibility criteria as part of its overall effort to "push down" the existing residential-based services into the community-based services on the assumption that this will be less expensive, much in the same manner as the Med-94/96 effort to push people out of NF's and into less expensive residential care. We are hopeful that the results of this participation will be a set of eligibility criteria which will better recognize the "real facts" than what DHHS started with at the beginning of the process.

As most of you will already know by now, the 2009-2010 Supplemental State Budget which was recently released by Governor Baldacci contains significant reductions in MaineCare expenditures for the remainder of the current fiscal year and the 2010-11 fiscal year for just about every category including NF's and residential care, with the real possibility of yet further reductions becoming necessary later next year as the status of the State's finances worsens with the continuing impact of the recession. We therefore expect the upcoming Legislative session to, once again, be a challenging one at best; however, as we continue our advocacy efforts here in Augusta, Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire continues to raise its visibility and voice and has become a significant participant in the legislative/regulatory process as an advocate for its members and those who they serve.

As always, we will regularly give the Maine members updates and status reports as we move through the legislative process. In order for us to be successful in that advocacy effort, it will be essential that each member be ready and willing to make contacts with their respective legislators to convey our message directly to them.

New Hampshire (as reported by Valerie Acres of Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group in Concord NH)

Aging Services of Maine and New Hampshire had great success during the 2009 legislative session, thanks largely to a vibrant Government Affairs Committee that meets bi-weekly by conference call to discuss legislation and other issues and to share ideas. The calls are every other Friday at 9:30 AM and all New Hampshire members are welcome - and encouraged - to join.

Our top priority last session was a bill introduced at our request on behalf of CCRC residents. SB 95, relative to criminal records checks for certain employees and volunteers, was signed by the Governor on July 16, 2009 and became effective the same day. The bill exempts residents who volunteer in an assisted living or health facility from state-mandated criminal records checks. It encountered a few unexpected bumps in the road but was, ultimately, enacted in a way that achieved our goal. While somewhat limited in scope, the legislative process on this bill provided a broader opportunity to educate legislators regarding CCRCs as an option for long-term care and to reinforce the idea that residents in CCRCs and other long-term care facilities view the campus or facility as their home and other residents as extended family. It also provided an excellent opportunity for management, staff and residents to work together toward a common goal.

Legislative success is more often defensive than offensive, however, and 2009 was no different. Here are some problematic bills we helped defeat:

HB 103 - A bill that would require employers to pay discharged or laid off employees in full and in hand within 72 hours of discharge or at the time of layoff thereby creating unreasonable logistic demands for human resource and payroll managers.

HB 402 - A bill that would require shredding of all medical records prior to being transported for disposal. Testimony indicated that medical records are routinely transported in a locked box for subsequent shredding in a closed environment, a practice that works well for privacy protection purposes without investment by every health facility in commercial quality shredding equipment and staff to operate it on-site.

HB 536 - A bill that would prohibit smoking in health facilities, including nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and within 50 feet around the perimeter of such facilities. While health facilities generally agree that smoking should be discouraged, long-term care health facilities are the home of residents and decisions regarding smoking should be left to each facility rather than state government.

HB 580 - A bill that would make New Hampshire privacy law more stringent than HIPAA thereby imposing unnecessary costs on health care facilities and impeding the development and use of electronic medical records which many believe will save money and improve patient care.

HB 661, HB 662, and HB 663 - Three bills that would mandate certain employee benefits (family leave insurance; paid sick leave; and flexibility regarding the number of hours, times, and locations of work) which should be left to the discretion of the employer based on the type of business involved, resources available, economic climate, regulatory demands, and other factors.

Legislative priorities for 2010 are still being determined. Please contact Bonnie Cohen, Rosie Goedtel or Valerie Acres if you would like to join the Government Affairs Committee in New Hampshire.