



National Skilled Nursing Care Week is not just about celebrating your residents and staff, it is also the perfect opportunity to invite the community and your local legislators to your facility to see just what long term care providers do every day. Invite your local legislators to visit during this special week for a tour and meet with the residents and staff who are their constituents. This is an opportunity to put local faces with a profession they hear about throughout the legislative session and the year, oftentimes in an unflattering message. Letting them see their constituents provide an important service and care for residents is an important part of building a positive image of long term care and is a first step toward relaying the value of our profession statewide.

AHCA and KAHCF Planning Guides

National Skilled Nursing Care Week is your facility's time to shine! This KAHCF supplemental planning guide is designed to be used in conjunction with the American Health Care Association (AHCA) planning guide to help member facilities develop their own National Skilled Nursing Care Week program. KAHCF offers this supplemental guide to provide our members with specific resources they may find helpful in developing, planning and carrying out special activities and events to highlight their facility during this week.

For more resources, go to:

- *Planning Guide National Skilled Nursing Care Week May 13-19, 2018*
- *Bookstore: [AHCA Publications Store](#)*
- *NNHW Facebook Page: www.facebook/NursingHomeWeek*

Involve Other Departments

Another key to a successful Skilled Nursing Care Week celebration is to involve other facility departments in the events and activities.

After the theme is developed, invite other staff to share in the planning process. Get the “thumbs up” from the department managers first, and then get support from other staff members. Get to know your co-workers and their talents, and think about those strengths as you plan your activities for the week. Tell each department/staff member the activity you have planned and what you would like their role to be.

The involvement of the dietary manager and department will be key to many events. Meet with the department manager and staff early in the planning process to get their support and assistance in menu planning. Ask for ideas and suggestions for special foods that could compliment your theme/activities.

Showcase other departments through your Skilled Nursing Care Week activities. Be sure to brainstorm with each department to encourage their involvement. Remember, as the activity professional in the facility, you will need to not only share your good ideas, but be a resource to other departments. Here are some ideas for involving other facility departments in your activities:

- **Dietary:** Get them involved early in the planning process. Does the dietary department have special foods and refreshments that they prepare? If so, find a way to incorporate these favorites into your activities;
- **Nursing/Therapy:** Have these departments host a health fair for residents, families, staff and other visitors. Offer blood pressure screenings, and other health oriented activities and events;
- **Marketing:** Plan a special event around your hospital discharge planners and other referral sources. Invite them into the facility for a luncheon, program or other activity;
- **Trade Show:** Involve all departments in a trade show that showcases their contribution to your residents. Have each department complete a “project board” that incorporates their “tools of the trade.” Set the project boards up in a common area, and have residents, family members, and other visitors go through the trade show to learn more about your facility. Have representatives from each department staff their booth and talk about the work they do. These project boards can be used again at community/facility functions including job and career fairs for local students;
- **Other Activities:** Like the project boards, have your staff decorate hats, wreaths, or other items to represent their job or department.

Most importantly, thank your co-workers for their support once Skilled Nursing Care Week is over. A simple thank you note to each department will make them more willing participating in facility events along with your thank you notes.

The Budget

Know your budget and work within it. Look for supplies throughout the year that can be used during Skilled Nursing Care Week, and buy early. Planning in advance will help you spread your available dollars further.

Consider ways to recycle supplies and decorations from other activities. Check with grocery stores, retailers, and other local businesses to see if they will donate decorations once they are finished with them. In many cases you can reuse these items and save some money.

Idea Resources

Finding the right resources to help you deliver an entertaining, memorable event can make all the difference. There are a number of resources available in your community, if you just know where to look. Become familiar with your community and the resources it has to offer.

The following list should help you get started in identifying resources you can use during Skilled Nursing Care Week, and throughout the year. Remember to contact these organizations early, and once you have their commitment, follow up with them to confirm their attendance at your event.

Speaker's Bureaus

Check with local universities/colleges, hospitals, businesses and organizations (American Heart Association, professional organizations, civic groups, Chambers of Commerce, etc.). Many of these groups provide speakers at no charge.

Publications/Web Sites

There are many publications and web sites developed specifically for activity professionals. Surf the web and see what you can find. Two sources to consider are: Creative Forecasting (www.creativeforecasting.net), and The Activity Connection (www.activityconnection.com).

Schools

Involvement with your local schools provides a great opportunity for intergenerational programs. In addition, many school groups require their members to perform community service through volunteer programs and projects. Check with the schools in your area to see how you can work together. There are many classes and school organizations that can serve as a resource, including:

- Music Department – orchestra, band, jazz groups, choral groups
- Drama/Dance Clubs – invite them to entertain your residents, or share the information they have learned in researching roles/performances
- Speech Classes – have residents serve as an audience for students practicing speeches or debates
- Home Economics Classes – discuss how foods have changed over time or host a joint cooking class
- Shop Class – may be able to build props for activities, or participate in a joint project with your residents
- Computer Classes – have students teach residents to “surf the net,” send e-mails, etc.
- Art Classes – ask students to provide decorations, or paint a mural in your facility, or hold an art show, or have a joint art class or project
- Foreign Language Classes – host a party with a foreign theme and ask the appropriate class to attend, ask them to teach your residents simple words in another language, have them share what they have learned about another country.

Colleges and Universities

As mentioned previously, many colleges and universities have speaker's bureaus and can provide lecturers on a wide variety of topics. In addition, many campus organizations (fraternities, sororities, honors groups, etc.) require their members donate their time as a community service. Find out the requirements and let these organizations know your facility is willing to work with them.

Churches

Churches are an excellent source for entertainment (choirs, drama, etc.), volunteers, holiday programs, etc. Many churches have a wealth of resources to share, and most are dedicated to giving back to their community.

Other Activity Professionals

Your peers are another great resource. Network with other activity professionals and organizations, and share your ideas. You may even be able to share props or supplies from past events. Check with KAHCF for information on how you can join the Kentucky Council of Activity and Social Services Professionals.

Other Resources

Think about the opportunities these and other community groups can provide for your facility:

- County Extension Offices/4-H Clubs
- Hospitals
- Homemakers Clubs
- Police Departments/Fire Departments - for programs on safety
- Funeral Homes
- Florists
- Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts
- Television/Radio Personalities
- Restaurants – fast food, pizza, and others
- Zoos
- Museums
- Local Car Clubs
- Health Care Organizations – American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Alzheimer's Association, etc.

Event Planning Checklist

Meet with Key People

Determine:

- goals
- objectives
- theme
- who's responsible for what
- date/time
- who will be attending (guest list)
- how you will promote the event
- possible speakers, entertainment, catering/menu
- budget
- timeline
- how success will be measured

Meet with caterers/dietary department

Finalize menu

Coordinate speakers/entertainment

Get speaker's bio information

Make travel arrangements (attendees, presenters)

Develop guest list, invitations, registration forms

Generate promotional materials

Develop media list

Place news releases

Distribute media kits

Follow-up with media (schedule interview, etc)

Assemble guest packets

Arrange for equipment (AV, seating, etc.)

Confirm reservations

Send media alert

Set up event site

Set up registration table

Attend to presenter's needs

Facilitate media interviews

Gather evaluation forms from attendees

Thank presenters

Tabulate evaluations

Make recommendations for future events

Send thank-you notes/follow-up information to attendees

Guide to Elected Officials

Caring for residents, recruiting and retaining staff, keeping up with new and revised rules and regulations, and being a viable part of the community are all part of running a great long term care facility, but there is often one group of people that is forgotten – legislators.

Members sometime question why politics belongs in a profession that takes care of people. But today, having a close relationship with your legislator is a must for survival in the long term care profession, regardless of facility size or location. The long-term care patient population is growing larger, and the general population – including lawmakers – knows little about the types of services rendered in a facility. Lawmakers need to know what takes place so they can make informed decisions, especially when they receive information from “opponents” of the profession.

Building a relationship with legislators can reap immeasurable benefits not only in the Legislature, but from the community as well. Inviting legislators to your facility during special events and keeping them informed about your facility through your newsletters is a must. Don't hesitate to invite them to learn what the long term care profession is all about and what a valuable resource your facility is in the community. Let the legislators see first-hand what your facility has to offer, and let them meet the residents you serve. This helps combat the negative publicity that long term care often receives. By inviting legislators to your facility, you give them a positive point of reference. If negative publicity hits the media, they know this is the exception and not the rule.

Building a relationship with legislators will not happen overnight; it will take some time. Becoming active in the community often speeds up the process, giving you more of an opportunity to see your legislators. Remember to keep your name in front of lawmakers.

National Skilled Nursing Care Week events are a great time to invite legislators to your facility. Ask them to join in a special activity where they can be involved. Let them plant a tree or flowers or have a special meal with residents and other community members. Give them a tour and let them visit with residents, families and staff.

The best time to invite a legislator to your facility is when Congress or state legislators are out of session. If the legislators are in session, try to plan the tour when there are not pressing legislative activities and only on days when there are not any votes - typically Monday and Friday.

Election season is also a great time to plan a facility tour. If your legislator is not available to visit during NNHW, don't let that stop you from scheduling a visit for a time that is more convenient for him or her. Candidates welcome the chance to meet with constituents. A tour of a long-term care facility can provide them with desirable photos and televised news coverage. To schedule a facility tour, begin by contacting your legislator's office and obtaining several possible dates when he or she is available. ***If you unsure of which legislators represent your facility, contact the Association at 502-425-5000.*** Follow the call with a formal letter of invitation. Describe the facility, its operation, and the number of employees and residents.

Obtaining a Proclamation

1. Call your public official's office and find out how proclamations are issued. Tell them about National Skilled Nursing Care Week and state when you would like to receive the proclamation.
2. Send a letter requesting the proclamation and include sample wording for the document.
3. Follow up with a phone call and be certain your request was received. Ask when you can expect the proclamation and how it will be sent to you.
4. Once you receive the proclamation, send a thank-you letter to express your gratitude.
5. If possible, invite the media while the public official is signing the proclamation.
6. Distribute to staff, clients and their families and/or publish in your newsletter.

Sample Mayor Proclamation

WHEREAS, our community's citizens now residing in nursing homes have contributed immeasurably to (town's) heritage of the years; and

WHEREAS, our community's nursing homes residents are themselves living history; and

WHEREAS, member facilities of the American Health Care Association and the Kentucky Association of Health Facilities are sponsoring many activities in observance of National Skilled Nursing Care Week guided by this year's theme "The Celebrating Life's Stories" and which begins on Mother's Day, May 13;

THEREFORE, do I, (Mayor's name), as mayor of the town of (name), urge all members of this community to join in this year's National Skilled Nursing Care

Week

observance by visiting our town's nursing home residents and by recognizing the high quality of care that our long-term care facilities are providing.

Preparing for a Facility Profile

In anticipation of facility events, you should prepare a profile of your facility that shows its place in the community. Your facility profile should be a printed “take-away” document that will help visitors remember the most important economic and community impact messages about your facility — the same points you will cover during a tour. It should include:

- Number of residents and services provided
- Number of employees
- Dollars paid in federal, state and local taxes by your facility
- Dollars paid in property taxes
- Number of vendors who support your facility (highlight local vendors)
- Unique services that you are providing to your employees, residents or the community (e.g., health seminars)
- List of community-service programs sponsored by your facility or your employees
- What long-term care is
- When your facility first opened, history of the facility
- The future of your facility

SAMPLE INVITATION

Date

The Honorable *(Elected Official's First and Last Name)*
(Address)

Dear *(Senator/Representative/Mayor) (Last Name)*:

May 13, 2018, Mother's Day, marks the beginning of National Skilled Nursing Care Week, honoring the residents, staff and volunteers in nursing facilities across the country. This year's theme, "The Celebrating Life's Stories" underscores the bond between staff, older adults, and individuals receiving therapies or with developmental disabilities. Staff and residents view each other as family. For staff, this reality is often a calling to a special mission and a life's work.

It would be our honor if you could visit our facility during this special week. Please let me know if you have an hour or two available between May 13 -19. We will be happy to host a reception for you and invite other members of the community, as well as the media. I can be reached at *(Insert email, phone or fax numbers and address)*.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will be able to join us as we celebrate this annual tradition.

Sincerely,

Name
Title

SAMPLE THANK YOU

Date

The Honorable *(Elected Officials First and Last Name)*
Address

Dear *(Senator/Representative/Mayor) (Last Name)*:

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to visit the residents and staff at *(facility name)* during National Skilled Nursing Care Week. Everyone here greatly enjoyed meeting with you, and each of us were gratified by your obvious commitment to issues affecting the quality and future of long term care in our community, state and nation.

I know your most valuable commodity is time, and we appreciate that you have shared some of it with us. I look forward to speaking with you again soon. If I can be of any assistance, in particular with technically complex issues involving long term care, please call on me anytime.

Sincerely,

Name
Title

P.S. Enclosed are some of the best photos we took during your tour of the *(facility name)*, as well as some press clippings about the event. I hope these will be of use to your staff for publicity purposes in the future.

Facility Tour

1. To schedule a facility tour, begin by calling or visiting your legislator's office and obtaining several possible dates when he or she is available. Follow the call with a formal letter of invitation. Describe the facility, its operation and the number of employees and residents.
2. If more than one public official is invited for the same tour, be sure each one knows in advance that the others will be included.
3. Set aside an entire morning or afternoon (approximately two hours) for the tour. Breakfast, lunch or a reception should be included. Notify employees about the tour and provide them with background information on the visitors. You can request campaign pamphlets from the visiting candidates. They will appreciate that the message is being delivered.
4. Include residents and their families in the process so they know you are actively involved on their behalf.
5. Send a press release to local media announcing the tour. Arrange for a good photographer to be on hand to take a selection of quality, non-intrusive photos of the event. Every elected official likes to have photos of meetings with constituent groups. Make sure you work closely with the legislator's office on press materials and planning.
6. Make it possible for employees, residents and family members to meet the elected officials or candidates. Schedule the visit so that the elected official or candidate will have time to make brief remarks to assembled employees.
7. Arrange for some time when you and your senior staff can sit down with the legislator in your office to discuss long-term care issues.
8. Plan for the overall tour to be conducted by the administrator. Assign specific supervisors to explain the operation of their work areas. Prepare them so they are comfortable and not surprised by the visitors.
9. After the tour, *always* send a thank-you letter to officials who made the visit. It is a nice touch to include copies of photographs or news related to the tour.

Source: AHCA

Conducting Your Facility Tour

- Always work with your administrator to plan the tour. It is important to conduct the tour carefully so that no one in your facility is permitted to monopolize your legislative guest's time, which is as limited as it is valuable.
- Before or after the meeting, show your legislative guest some of the realities of resident care and compliance with changing standards. Emphasize quality resident care during the tour and throughout the visit.
- Show the legislator areas of the facility that have been subject to changing compliance standards or interpretations. Discuss the costs of achieving compliance.
- If there is a regulation that poses particular difficulties in application for your facility — for example, storage of linen carts or cross contamination — point out to the legislator some of the real-life roadblocks to compliance.
- Discuss the range of care provided and the varied costs of that care. If you discuss types of disabilities, be careful about patient confidentiality.
- Talk to the legislator about the demographic tidal wave that will hit long-term care for the next 25 years. Explain that the current long-term care financing system will not withstand this pressure. Then discuss possible solutions with the legislator (e.g. long-term care insurance).
- If there is a regulation that poses particular difficulties in application to your facility — for example, storage of linen carts or cross contamination — point out to the legislator some of the “real life roadblocks” to compliance.
- Point out as many types of patients as possible and discuss the range of care provided and varied cost of care. This will help to give a realistic and well-rounded picture to the lawmaker.
- While you are speaking with the legislator, ask open-ended questions (that require more than a yes or no answer) in order to elicit lengthier, thoughtful responses, for example:
 - “From your legislative perspective, what do you see as the key issues affecting long-term care in America today?”
 - “How do you think we should address the rising costs of long term health care in the years to come?”
 - “Do you see the need for more community involvement in the legislative process? If so, what can we do together to help encourage more involvement?”
- It is best to stick to the facts. Don't give way to emotional arguments or unsubstantiated opinions and never stretch the truth.
- Be a good listener, even if the legislator disagrees with aspects of our position. Acknowledge where other views have merit, and stress that you want to work more closely whenever possible.
- Always try to end on a positive note and leave the meeting open-ended for further discussions.

Sample News Release

Use facility letterhead

For Immediate Release

Contact: Name/Phone

(Name of Facility) Celebrates National Skilled Nursing Care Week

(City, State) (Date) In observance of National Skilled Nursing Care Week, May 13 - 19, (your facility name) will host a series of events designed to enrich the relationships and contacts between residents, youth, community members, and family and staff. The theme of the week is "Celebrating Life's Stories."

"Our residents and staff have so much to share," said (your administrator) "and this seemed like the perfect showcase."

Some of the week's special events include:

(Name of event) (Date) (Time) (Sentence describing event)

(Name of event) (Date) (Time) (Sentence describing event)

(Name of event) (Date) (Time) (Sentence describing event)

National Skilled Nursing Care Week is an annual observance sponsored by the American Health Care Association and (name of State Association). (Name of facility) is a (number)-bed nursing facility located in (City), (State).

News Advisory Format

(Facility Name) Celebrates National Skilled Nursing Care Week

The (Facility Name) will be hosting a celebration (date) for approximately (# staff/volunteers) and (# of residents) in recognition of National Skilled Nursing Care Week, May 13 - 19. The theme for National Skilled Nursing Care Week is "The Celebrating Life's Stories." The highlight of the festivities will be (insert activity).

WHO: Staff, volunteers and residents at (Facility Name)
(Name, Title of person sending the advisory)

WHAT: (title of event)

WHERE: (facility address)

WHEN: (date of event)

The schedule of events follows:

TIME:

EVENT:

CONTACT: (Name, title, facility and phone number)