

ProCARE NEWS

ProCARE Therapy Services Newsletter

4th Quarter 2017

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Happy New Year! HAPPY DAY!

The 4th quarter and 2017 comes to a finish. Changes in taxes and healthcare, hurricanes, floods and wildfires, and the Houston Astros won the World Series. Phew! Big changes over the past year, and we expect many more in the next. However, one thing we know here at ProCARE...We have the right people and the right stuff... Thank you for being with us!

AND...Please give a warm ProCARE welcome to:

Marissa Newton, PTA , Ouachita and Pine Hills; Shelly Gilbert, COTA ,South; Kristina Berry, COTA , Valley Springs; Ashley Martin SLP/RD, Des Arc .

We are glad to have you with us! Welcome!



“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbor, and let every new year find you a better man.”

— Benjamin Franklin



UGLY SWEATERS RULE! Karen Lewis, COTA; Donnie Hanson, COTA; Chris Willis, PTA, RD show the spirit! And, what a sight it is!!!!

In This Issue

- Goodbye 2017
- Welcome !
- Clinical Corner
- Dementia & Pain
- In the News
- CMS Update: Caps



BALANCE SYSTEM REMINDERS

No matter how strong a patient becomes, he or she may still fall if the underlying balance systems are not addressed!

Vestibular – A complex neurological system, often incorrectly simplified as “inner-ear”, because the system may become disrupted by ear infections and injury. *(The vestibular system is dominant in children, and a reason they enjoy swings and Merry-go-rounds. This helps to interpret up/down, side/side and circular movement, and can cause nausea when disrupted.)*

Like everything else, the vestibular system operates on a use it or lose it system. Movement and activity are important to vestibular health, and awareness of issues that impact the delicate mechanics of the inner ear, sinus and fluids are important. Swings, rocking chairs, and activities that stimulate this system are good for adults too!

Visual - This system receives information from direct visual scanning of the environment, and is the dominant balance system of adults. Balance difficulty may occur in low light and when visual outlines are not well defined.

As we age, low light becomes problematic, colors appear drab, and the reaction time of our retina and lens decline. Not only should vision checks and glasses be provided, but environmental lighting is crucial.

Somatosensory – This balance system is stimulated by sensory input and stimulation of joints and body, that occur with movement and pressure. We rely on somatosensory systems more as we age, and as vestibular systems and visual systems become less reliable. PVD, neuropathy, inactivity, gerichair use, bed-rest or even overuse of wheelchair, will cause decreased somatosensory response.

Lacey Thomasson, PTA; Stacey Weaver, COTA; Katie Hopkins, PTA; Hailey Gammel, PTA; Keri Freer, RD, OT; Laura McKelvin, PTA, Sydney Perry, COTA. Go St. Johns!



Our ability to weight-shift and make minute adjustments to balance are secondary to our joint’s ability to feel pressure and movement. Sit-to-stand, walking, exercise and activities are vital to maintaining and recovering this function. Therapy, with emphasis, on PNF patterns and weighted joints are recommended.

Let’s ensure that we are providing the optimal environment and interventions to maximize the abilities of our elders and reduce decline and risk factors.

SPECIFICALLY address VISUAL limitations and SOMATOSENSORY declines; these are the neurological foundations of balance!

POINT OF INTEREST:

According to *McKights News*, reporting December, 12, 2017, some studies report that pressures on hospitals to lower readmission rates may have negative side effects, and may in some instance compromise patient care. Research at the University of Michigan appeared to indicate that often the reduction in admission rates is secondary to changes in patient classification or description of claims data. The article also describes research by Harvard and UCLA that point to increased mortality rates correlated with decreased readmission data.





IN THE NEWS:

Per McKnight's Long Term Care News, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) backed away from Medicare reform, saying it won't be a Republican focus this spring. Instead, Ryan said the focus next year will be on welfare reform.

"Do we want to get entitlement reform? Of course we do, but the kinds of entitlement reforms I think that we're going to be pursuing are the kinds that help make sure we get people from welfare to work," Ryan said on ABC News.

However, there still may be a push for reform and reduction from both Republicans and Democrats in reaction to tax reform and in relation to the PAYGO Act. (PAYGO triggers automatic cuts to specific programs, including Medicare.)

Nevertheless, Speaker Ryan clearly indicated that he was not inclined to overhaul Medicare in an election year, though he does favor a shift to more private insurance.

TIPS: PAIN AND DEMENTIA

Dementia typically degrades the ability to effectively communicate, as the disease progresses. Elders may demonstrate a particularly decreased ability when they are sick or in pain. This leads to a diminished ability to express themselves when they are at their most vulnerable. Unrecognized pain and illness contributes to many negative effects on a patient's health and quality of life.

Look for the following indications that your elder may have underlying pain, illness, fear or discomfort. In each instance, the circumstance surrounding the patient's behavior and changes, as well as a more thorough assessment, will help define the cause:

Body Language and facial expressions- Often we are so focused on a task at hand that we may not notice the occasional change in facial expression. Remember that a patient with limited expressive language skills may use scowling, grimacing, or other unusual expressions to let us know they are in pain.

Physical gestures- A patient that strikes at a therapist, or pushes a caregiver away is communicating discomfort. Also, a sudden change in posture or a sudden movement, may be indicative of something not "quite right."

Behavioral changes- A patient's change in behavior, sleep patterns, appetite, or activity patterns may be an indication of discomfort, pain or illness.

Emotional and mental changes- Sudden outbursts of crying, anxiety, a new or sudden onset of paranoia, irritability, or increased levels of confusion could be your patient's way of communicating pain or discomfort.

Sounds and noises- A patient may use expletives, or simply grunt or moan. Aggressive language could also be indicative of pain, fear or discomfort.

Changes in Respiration - Changes in breathing rate and respiration could be indicative of pain, fear or discomfort. For example, a patient may hold their breath or breathe rapidly with minimal activity.

All facility staff must be aware of subtle changes. Proper assessment and intervention truly can make a difference to those who cannot communicate effectively. The correct identification of pain, fear and discomfort can allow the appropriate interventions to improve the health and quality of life for those elders that we serve.

CMS UPDATE

Congress Defers Action on Therapy Caps Permanent Repeal Policy Into the New Year

We all hoped for a permanent repeal of therapy caps at the end of 2017. Alas, it did not happen. Currently the therapy cap, in the amount of \$2,010 is in effect as of January 1, 2018 for Occupational Therapy, and \$2,010 for Physical Therapy and Speech Language Pathology, combined.

Per the NASL, December 22, 2017 notification, "In deferring action on government funding, Congress will likely consider two packages in January:

- First, addressing budget caps (which constrain discretionary spending), which is likely to include a Medicare offset; and
- Second, approving appropriations for the remainder of FY2018 (through September 30, 2018).

It is possible that health extenders, including permanent policy on therapy caps, will be included on one of these packages in January, but we caution that the situation in Congress can always change quickly. Other issues remaining for these packages include full authorization of CHIP as well as action on the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program, related to undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children."



Thank you!

Thank you for a wonderful 2017. All of us at ProCARE Therapy Services know that every year brings gifts and challenges. We believe that working with elders, and serving in healthcare is a gift, and every challenge is an opportunity to serve and grow. We look forward to serving, growing and working with all of you in 2018.

Sincerely,

Your ProCARE Therapy Family

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and how we can help you!

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LLC

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