Legislative Policy Brief

The 2014 National Emerging Leadership Summit for Health Care Administrators in Health and Aging Services

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Co-Sponsored by:

Special thanks to:

The Wertlieb Family
The National Emerging Leadership Summit for Health Care Administrators
“The Changing Face of Post-Acute Care and Services”
Senate Special Committee on Aging
Legislative Policy Brief

The National Emerging Leadership Summit (NELS) for Long-Term Care Administrators is an annual gathering of emerging leaders in the field of health and aging services administration to engage in discussions of current best practices, meet with representatives of key professional organizations, gain an inside perspective on the legislative process, and explore solutions for attracting and retaining other new and evolving leaders. As part of the fifth annual NELS, summit participants attended a behind-the-scenes legislative presentation at the United States Senate, followed by a legislative forum, where experts and representatives of professional and provider organizations discussed the professional development challenges and opportunities for health services executives leading contemporary changes to the care and services for individuals following an episode of acute care. Those present included:

- Senator Tammy Baldwin (D – WI), Senate Special Committee on Aging, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee (Invited)
- Oliver Kim, J.D., LL.M., Deputy Director, Senate Special Committee on Aging
- Brian Sutter, Health Staff Director, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee
- Alicia Hennie, Staff, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee
- Kim Zimmerman, MPP, Senior Director of Policy and Government Relations, American Health Care Association
- Robert E. Burke, Ph.D., Chair and Professor, Health Services Management and Leadership, Gordon A. Friesen Professor of Health Care, The George Washington University
- Randy Lindner, MHSA, CAE, President and Chief Executive Officer, National Association of Long-Term Care Administrators Boards and the Foundation of the NAB
- Daniel Schwartz, MHSA, Chief Operating Officer, Almost Family
- Peter Notarstefano, MS, Director of Home and Community Based Services, LeadingAge
- Cynthia Thorland, Vice President and Director of Educational Resources, LCS
- Marilyn Duker, President, Brightview Senior Living
- Sean Foster, Vice President of Operations, Golden Living
- Karen Tritz, Director of the Division of Nursing Homes, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Marianna Kern Grachek, MSN, CNHA, CALA, FACHCA, President and Chief Executive Officer, American College of Health Care Administrators
- Douglas Olson, NHA, MBA, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, Center for Health Administration and Aging Services Excellence
The first session for NELS participants included an overview of the Federal legislative process in Washington, D.C. Following an introduction and overview of the panelists from Dr. Robert Burke, Oliver Kim welcomed the NELS participants to the Capitol and thanked the participants for their involvement in the NELS summit. Mr. Kim discussed the changing needs of health care patients and the evolving requirements for care with increased longevity and advancing technology. Mr. Kim also discussed the issue of “observation stays” as one of interest to Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL), who chairs the Senate Special Committee on Aging. This committee has recently been working to analyze how health care is delivered to patients and residents, and re-think better ways to maximize efficient care. Additionally, Mr. Kim emphasized the other work of the committee on Social Security and a long-term care facility closing in Senator Nelson’s home state of Florida.

Brian Sutter continued next and explained the differences in composition between the House of Representatives and the Senate, including the varying ideologies within each political party and the heightened partisan nature of the Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Sutter discussed the current initiative to pursue a value-based purchasing program for nursing homes, which has bipartisan support and industry support. The House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee is also working on post-acute care reform, including analyses of Medicare Part A and insuring the trust fund for Medicare and Medicaid is adequately funded into the future. Mr. Sutter also echoed the Senate work on observation stays in the House committee and included information from the Congressional Budget Office on the costs associated with various proposals to address these observation stays.

From the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Alicia Hennie highlighted the committee’s successful bipartisan work, including the number of bills produced by the committee which have been signed into law. Led by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), the HELP Committee has tackled such issues as compounding pharmacies and FDA certification for drugs produced, employment training programs, changes to the ombudsman programs under the Older Americans Act, and prescription drug abuse, which includes work involving CMS surveys of long-term care facilities. Ms. Hennie also discussed the process of the HELP Committee, where markups and changes to language are addressed prior to the legislation going to the full Senate, and the work of conference committees with Senate and House legislators.

Lastly, Kim Zimmerman from the American Health Care Association (AHCA), discussed her time as a legislative staffer prior to joining AHCA to work on government affairs. She discussed the stakeholder work by AHCA to gather individuals with a common interest in legislative proposals, and the initiatives pursued by AHCA: reducing re-hospitalization rates, reducing staff turnover, reducing antipsychotic medication use, and increasing satisfaction of nursing home residents. Ms. Zimmerman also discussed the work on observation stays and attempts to have these stays.
count for Medicare reimbursement. Ms. Zimmerman also encouraged NELS participants to invite their respective legislators to their facilities to show their elected officials the care and services delivered to residents.

Following the panel presentations, Dr. Burke facilitated questions from NELS participants, which the panelists gladly answered. Topics covered during the question session included advice on how individuals could follow up with legislators after a visit, the prioritization of funding and how legislative committees determine where and how to allocate funds, the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) and the Balanced Budget Act (BBA), anti-fraud policies within Medicare, regulation of nursing home care and services, and the diversity of administrator-in-training (AIT) programs across the United States.

The second panel began with an introduction from Dr. Douglas Olson, who thanked the panelists for participating. Dr. Olson asked each panelist to speak on the key challenges facing the health services administration field, both from the panelist’s perspective and from the perspective of the specific area of post-acute care the panelist represented. Panelists included representatives from skilled nursing care, assisted living, home- and community-based services, senior housing, professional organizations, and health services education.

Randy Lindner, representing the National Association of Long-Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB) and it’s Foundation, discussed the professional practice analysis conducted by NAB, which was adopted by the organization’s board this year. The analysis found that 82% of the competencies for skilled nursing, assisted living, and home and community based services were common across the three care settings. The report will be used in the development of the Health Services Executive (HSE) credential, to give health services leaders greater career flexibility in moving across the continuum of care and services and licensure mobility. Mr. Lindner also explained how the HSE credential could be used to aid in the creation of model academic, AIT and preceptor training programs across the country.

Daniel Schwartz, from Almost Family, spoke next about the image problem of the health services and long-term care profession and how many of the newer health services executives have not lived through this image creation problem. Mr. Schwartz emphasized the importance of measuring quality of care given against meaningful outcomes rather than utilizing a “check the box” approach. As champions for the quality of care for residents and their family, he suggested that only the administrator himself/herself can have the foundational passion necessary for this line of work. Mr. Schwartz encouraged participants to work to overcome barriers in the profession (e.g., lack of licensure portability, unfunded AIT programs) and to develop their own talent pool within their organizations to ensure successful delivery of meaningful care and services to residents and clients.
As Director of Home- and Community-Based Services for LeadingAge, Peter Notarstefano suggested using a term other than “continuum” of care when discussing the range of long-term care and services for older adults and those with chronic conditions. The leaders of home- and community-based services (HCBS) organizations should, as he stated, think of their delivery of care as similar to that which may be received within a skilled nursing facility or assisted living facility. Mr. Notarstefano discussed a “constellation of services” that a health care executive must think of in the changing world of long-term care, noting that 75% of LeadingAge members without HCBS in their facilities plan to add some form of HCBS in the next five years. While individuals are living longer with more complex care needs, he advanced the idea that one strategy of care delivery (e.g., facility-based care) may be implemented in other areas of long-term care (e.g., HCBS), and vice versa. With home care jobs projected to increase by approximately 70% over the next decade, Mr. Notarstefano discussed initiatives to attract workers starting at a younger age than reaching out to individuals at the collegiate education level.

Next, Cynthia Thorland, representing LCS, discussed her organization’s work to train leaders during a paid training program for meeting licensure requirements. Ms. Thorland emphasized the need for health services professionals to have a heart for seniors, an essential element required to remain effective in the profession. With the recent media coverage of the “baby boom” and the increasing amount of older adults needing long-term care and services, she highlighted the greater interest in a health services executive career. Ms. Thorland discussed the commonality between different care settings and their administrators, and included mention of the difficulty in transitioning between states without assistance from the company the administrator works for. She also discussed the opportunity for individuals to do summer internships, with the hope that some individuals may grow into leadership roles based on their experience with such a program.

Marilyn Duker, from The Shelter Group and Brightview Senior Living, discussed the key challenges of determining where new leaders are coming from and appropriate frontline caregiver roles as services continue to grow. Ms. Duker explained that many leaders in senior living settings come from long-term care facilities (e.g., nursing homes, assisted living) but lack the hospitality services necessary for senior living leadership roles. While working to establish relationships with various educational programs, she explained the challenges of training leaders who wish to have greater mobility and who come from a more narrow geographic area. Ms. Duker discussed a personality index tool her organization uses for recruitment purposes as well as mentorship and reading programs used for new executive directors.

Representing Golden Living, Sean Foster articulated various methods to improve resident life through innovative health care and improve quality of life. Mr. Foster spoke about evaluation
of leaders entering this profession to identify attributes that successful leaders share, and looking also at the “soft skills” (e.g., passion, drive for excellence), too. He discussed how challenges faced by leaders present great opportunity for individual and institutional growth, including the recommendation that leaders publicize their innovations in care and service delivery, and noted the potential leveraging of success with University and provider organization partnerships in leadership development. Mr. Foster also strongly encouraged participants to embrace advances in technology, including electronic health records, to improve the processes for delivering care. He reminded participants to stay passionate, to take care of their staff members, and to take risks to ensure the optimal level of care for residents.

Karen Tritz, Director of the Division of Nursing Homes at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), spoke to the critical importance of effective leadership and how effective leaders set the tone within their organization. While the industry is going through extraordinary change due to passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, she encouraged participants to work with leadership at CMS to get a sense of how residents are cared for and to determine areas for growth as leaders in long-term care. Ms. Tritz suggested that participants participate in national organizations to connect with colleagues for networking and educational growth opportunities. She highlighted the eleventh “Scope of Work” from CMS, where approximately 5,000 nursing homes are participating to identify which practices advance resident quality of care the most. Ms. Tritz encouraged participants to visit the CMS website and access the materials on Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) available there (http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/QAPI/nhqapi.html).

As a faculty member in the Health Services Management and Leadership Program at The George Washington University, Dr. Robert Burke discussed the crossroads that educational programs face with respect to preparing students to pass licensure and competency exams, but also addressing the variety in those exams and AIT programs across the United States. He emphasized the number of state-governed regulations for the industry, and highlighted the fact that many states stick to a “what’s been done before” approach, which serves to perpetuate the contemporary issues faced by the profession. Dr. Burke spoke to the need for academic programs and AIT programs to work toward the common competencies for multiple services lines in academic curriculum and preparatory placements for future long-term care leaders.

Lastly, Marianna Kern Grachek, from the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA), focused on the passion of leaders in long-term care and their “passion trajectory.” She emphasized the continual need to determine what else can and should be done within a facility and within a profession, incorporating the resources and assistance from professional organizations that is at their members’ disposal. Ms. Grachek discussed the work of ACHCA and
NAB on developing AIT programs that are acceptable to a wide variety of states and also effectively develop new professionals in the field of long-term care. She challenged the current cohort of NELS participants to take ownership of their work at the summit and beyond, to make sure the goals and recommendations see the attention they merit.

Dr. Olson concluded the panel session by thanking the panelists and NELS participants, and committing the energies and efforts of the NELS summit to exploring the recommendations made by panelists. He commented on the number of high impact practices noted by the panelist and the opportunities to advance proactive initiatives in collaboration for the professional field of health and aging services administration. Members on the panel, along with participants attending the NELS conference, committed to work in the days ahead to achieve progress on the recommendations suggested during the policy forum and to work in their respective states to achieve progress on the recommended policy initiatives. Dr. Olson thanked the panelists for their excellent remarks and also thanked the supportive organizations and individuals who helped make the policy forum a success, including ACHCA, NAB, the Wertlieb Family Foundation, Golden Living and the George Washington University.

Any correspondence regarding this legislative policy brief, its recommendations, or the 2014 NELS summit, should be sent directly to Dr. Douglas Olson, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, at olsondou@uwec.edu. For further information on the NELS summits, please visit: http://publichealth.gwu.edu/projects/national-emerging-leadership-summit.