



# ALMDA

## News & Notes

THE SOCIETY FOR POST-ACUTE AND LONG-TERM CARE MEDICINE

WWW.ALMDA.ORG

## ALMDA Mid-Winter Conference registration is open

Please join us at the Hyatt Regency Birmingham - The Wynfrey Hotel on Saturday, Jan. 30, 2016, for our Mid-Winter Conference.

Conference topics include:

- Polypharmacy and Reducing Prescriptions in the Nursing Home;
- ALF/SCALF Survey Process;
- Advanced Directives and DNR;
- Management of the Spinal Cord Injured in the Long Term Care Setting; and
- Behavioral Health and Readmissions.

See the full agenda and CME information on page 5.

New this year is a Resident and Student Poster Contest. See details on page 2. (Note: Residents and Students may attend the conference for free!)

Register online at [www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2016](http://www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2016) or you may print a *Membership and Meeting Registration form*.

To reserve a room at the Hyatt Regency call (205) 705-1234 or go online to <https://resweb.paskey.com/go/almedwinter2016>. Rates begin at \$133.

## Renew your membership to keep ALMDA strong!

Thank you for your membership and continued support of ALMDA – the professional association of physicians, physician assistants, nurses and other professionals practicing in the long-term care continuum.

ALMDA provides opportunities for quality education, stellar networking, and advocacy at the state level. We have extended benefits through ALMDA including free webinars, clinical practice guidelines, national advocacy and national networking.

I encourage you to make plans now to join us for our two conferences in 2016: Mid-Winter Conference, Jan. 30, in Birmingham where we will host a Resident and Student poster contest; and Annual Conference, July 28-31, in Destin, Fla.

You may register for both conferences and pay your 2016 dues online at [www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2016](http://www.tinyurl.com/ALMDA2016) or you may print a *Membership and Meeting Registration form*. **Please share this link with your colleagues to ensure we reach everyone who will benefit from membership in ALMDA.** We welcome membership from all: medical directors, attending physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, administrators, directors of nursing and facility staff.

Your support of ALMDA as a member and attendee of our conferences ensures we will remain a strong organization and an effective advocate for our patients.

Sincerely,

Kendra Sheppard, MD, MSPH, CMD  
President



**SAVE UP TO \$75**  
ON ALMDA'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE!

Refer your colleagues to join ALMDA, and save \$25 per new member enrollment (up to \$75).



## SNF Care; E/M Code Review Included in OIG Work Plan

The Office of Inspector General for Health and Human Services (OIG) recently issued its 2016 Work Plan, which sets the agenda for its auditing and investigation in the year ahead. The broad mandate of the OIG is to eliminate fraud, waste and abuse. The work plan describes more than 100 initiatives, 43 of which are new, for the upcoming year. The plan focuses on a variety of different health care aspects including nursing homes, home health agencies, pharmacies and hospitals.

In the past, the OIG has had success with recovering Medicare payments for therapy in nursing homes. Now the OIG is starting a new focus on the documentation requirements specified in 42 CFR Section 483.20 to insure that

SNF care is “reasonable and necessary.” Such documentation includes 1) a physician order at the time of admission for the resident’s immediate care 2) a comprehensive assessment and 3) a comprehensive plan of care prepared by an interdisciplinary team that includes the attending physician, a registered nurse, and other appropriate staff.

The OIG will also report on the implementation status and early results for the National Background Check program for long-term-care employees from the first four years of the program.

Another new initiative for 2016 will be the OIG review on the use of the general inpatient care level for the Medicare hospice benefit. “We will assess

the appropriateness of hospices’ general inpatient care claims and the content of election statement for hospice beneficiaries who receive general in patient care. We will also review hospice medical records to address concerns that this level of hospice care is being billed when that level of service is not medically necessary. We will review beneficiaries’ plans of care and determine whether they meet key requirements.”

The OIG will also review whether Medicare payments to physicians for prolonged evaluation and management (E/M) services were reasonable and made in accordance with Medicare requirements.

To review the entire report [click here](#).

## Registration is open for Governmental Affairs Conference Feb. 1-3

Make plans to join your colleagues in Washington, DC, for the Medical Association’s 2016 Governmental Affairs Conference, Feb. 1-3.

The deadline to book a room at the Willard InterContinental is Jan. 4. Call (888) 424-6835 with group code JK8 or go online to [Washington.intercontinental.com](#). Room rates begin at \$279.

Protecting and promoting medicine’s interests on Capitol Hill is a never-ending responsibility that requires participation from physicians across all specialties. This is particularly true considering the magnitude of the health issues confronting Congress. Due to the Congressional schedule, the format of the 2016 Governmental Affairs meeting has been changed in order to increase participation from our Senators and Representatives. Under the new format, meetings will begin late Monday afternoon and will conclude mid-day Wednesday. For those arriving early to enjoy D.C., rooms will be available under our block at the discounted rate.

[Download the brochure](#)



# ALMDA

The Society for Post-Acute and  
Long-Term Care Medicine

## Call for Research Abstracts

ALMDA requests abstract submissions from residents and students for possible poster presentation at the 2016 Mid-Winter Meeting Jan. 30, 2016, in Birmingham.

Abstracts must be on clinical vignettes, quality improvement or research. The submitted abstracts are published on the ALMDA website. These count as “Published Abstracts” on a CV and is a very easy way to build your academic portfolio!

The posters will be judged at the conference and awards given to the highest ranking posters.

Find additional requirements and submission guidelines on [ALMDA’s website](#).

Abstracts must be received by Dec. 31. Send by e-mail to [jhayes@masalink.org](mailto:jhayes@masalink.org).

Residents and students may attend the Mid-Winter Conference for FREE! Register at [www.tinyurl.com/ALMDAmidwinter2016](http://www.tinyurl.com/ALMDAmidwinter2016) or download a [registration form](#).

# CMS Finalizes 2016 Medicare Payment Rules for Physicians, Hospitals & Other Providers

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued final rules detailing how the agency will pay for services provided to Medicare beneficiaries in 2016.

“CMS is pleased to implement the first fee schedule since Congress acted to improve patient access by protecting physician payments from annual cuts. These rules continue to advance value-based purchasing and promote program integrity, making Medicare better for consumers, providers, and taxpayers,” said CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt.

AMDA's comments on several key issues had a major influence on proposals finalized in the rule. These include:

## Advance Care Planning

CMS finalized payment for the already established Advance Care Planning CPT codes. The rule establishes separate payment and a payment rate for two advance care planning services provided to Medicare beneficiaries by physicians and other practitioners.

In a press release in July, AMDA president Naushira Pandya, MD, CMD, expressed her support for the “vital advance care planning services” further stating that “post-acute and long-term care practitioners provide quality and thoughtful care and family members and friends of very ill patients will receive greater peace of mind that the care their loved ones receive is based on adequate medical information, collaborative goal setting, as well as respect for personal wishes and values in order to maximize comfort and quality of life.” AMDA members played an integral role responding to requests for input during the development phase of these codes.

## SNF POS 31 and ACO Attribution

CMS also responded to AMDA's concerns around attribution of skilled nursing facility (SNF) (POS 31) patients to the Medicare Shared Savings Accountable Care Organizations (ACO). In the final rule, CMS states that they received support for comments initially put forth by AMDA arguing that “ACOs are often inappropriately assigned patients who have had long SNF stays but would not otherwise be aligned to the ACO and with whom the ACO has no clinical contact after their SNF stay.” AMDA raised similar concerns in its letters and meetings with CMS officials. CMS further states that, “Although the same CPT visit codes are used to describe these services in SNFs (POS31) and NFs (POS32), the patient population is arguably quite different.” CMS opines that the difference in the populations is that “Patients in SNFs (POS 31) are shorter stay patients who are receiving continued acute medical care and rehabilitative services. While their care may be coordinated during their time in the SNF, they are then transitioned back in the community. Patients in a SNF (POS 31) require more frequent practitioner visits often from 1 to 3 times a week. In contrast, patients in NFs (POS 32) are almost always permanent residents and generally receive their primary care services in the facility for the duration of their life. Patients in the NF (POS 32) are usually seen every 30 to 60 days unless medical necessity dictates otherwise.”

Based on this distinction, CMS finalized its proposal to amend the definition of primary care services at §425.20, for purposes of the Shared Savings Program, to exclude services billed under CPT codes 99304 through 99318 when the claim includes the POS 31 modifier.

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# Medical Association of the State of Alabama announces Prescription Assistance Program for patients

Patients who need help with the cost of prescription medications can now get a free prescription assistance card made available by the state's largest association of physicians.

The Medical Association of the State of Alabama is promoting the Alabama Rx Card, a discount drug card free to Alabama residents. The discount card

generates savings of up to 75 percent on prescription drugs at hundreds of participating pharmacies statewide.

The discount card helps uninsured and under-insured residents afford prescription medications, which has already saved Alabama residents more than \$25 million since inception.

“Alabama's physicians are committed to our patients' health and well-being, so helping patients get the medications they need is a priority. Patients can't get well if they can't get their prescriptions,” said Medical Association President Buddy Smith Jr., MD, of Lineville.

The Alabama Rx Card discounts will benefit patients whose health insurance coverage does not include prescription benefits, which is common in many

health savings accounts and high deductible health plans. Those who do have prescription coverage with their health insurance can use this program to get discounts on medications that are not covered by their insurance plan. Patients will have the ability to go to the Alabama Rx Card to see prices for their particular prescriptions and determine the level of discount they might receive.

All are eligible regardless of their current prescription coverage benefits.

Alabama residents can print a free card, search drug pricing, and locate participating pharmacies at [www.alabamarxcard.com](http://www.alabamarxcard.com), [www.masalink.org](http://www.masalink.org), or [www.alabamamedicine.org](http://www.alabamamedicine.org).



## News Briefs

### Antibiotic-resistant infections

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released new recommendations aimed at improving prescribing practices and reduced consequences of antibiotic-resistant infections in nursing homes.

The Core Elements for Nursing Homes expand upon CDC's recommendation that all acute care hospitals implement an antibiotic stewardship program designed to optimize treatment of infections while reducing adverse events associated with antibiotic use.

The CDC advises all nursing homes take steps to improve antibiotic prescribing practices and reduce their inappropriate use in order to protect

residents from the consequences of antibiotic-resistant infections.

Read more on [ALMDA's Website](#).

### Free CEU training comes to Alabama

Younger adults (ages 18-64) are the fastest growing population in nursing homes. Varying behavioral, clinical, psychiatric, sexual and social issues may present differently in the younger adult population, often causing isolation for the resident and confusion among staff.

ALMDA will present "Improving the Quality of Care and Life for Younger Adults in Long-Term Care" on Jan. 25, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency - The Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham.

CEUs will be provided for physicians, nurses and social workers.

Admission is Free. For more information and to register visit <http://bit.ly/AlabamaYA>.

### Immunization recommendations for Pneumococcal vaccination

ALMDA has received a number of inquiries regarding the policy coverage due to the ramifications of the changes and has produced an FAQs information sheet to help navigate the new coverages. See answers to frequently asked questions on [ALMDA's Website](#).

### End-of-life care

End-of-life care for nursing home residents has long been associated with poor symptom control and low family satisfaction. An editorial published in the *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association* calls for bold action to improve the care and support provided to dying nursing home patients and their families.

"The IOM Report on Dying in America: A Call to Action for Nursing Homes" focuses on applying Institute of Medicine recommendations to nursing home residents, many in the last phase of their lives.

Resource: [Journal of the American Medical Directors Association](#) (ALMDA login required)

## ALMDA Annual Conference: March 17-20

*Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.*

ALMDA will host a reception for Alabama attendees of ALMDA's Annual Conference on Friday, March 18, from 6:30-8:00 p.m. For more information, contact ALMDA Executive Director [Jennifer Hayes](#).

## Medicare payment rules, cont.

### Other policies CMS finalized in this rule included:

- **Beginning the new physician payment system post the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula and supporting patient- and family-centered care.** CMS is beginning implementation of the new payment system for physicians and other practitioners – the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System.
- **Medicare Shared Savings Program.** The Medicare Shared Savings Program was established to promote accountability for a patient population, coordinate items and services under parts A and B, and encourage investment in infrastructure and redesigned care processes for high quality and efficient service delivery through provider and supplier participation in an ACO.
- **Finalizing updates to the "Two-Midnight" rule.** The rule clarifies when inpatient admissions are appropriate for payment under Medicare Part A. This continues CMS' long-standing emphasis on the importance of a physician's medical judgment in meeting the needs of Medicare beneficiaries by providing clearer guidelines and a more collaborative approach to education and enforcement. This was part of the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System final rule.

### Finalizing the End-Stage Renal Disease Quality Incentive Program.

The End-Stage Renal Disease final rule will apply payment incentives to dialysis facilities to improve the quality of dialysis care. Facilities that do not achieve a minimum total performance score with respect to quality measures, such as anemia management, patient experience, infections, and safety, will receive a reduction in their payment rates.

## ALMDA News & Notes

### Alabama Medical Directors Association

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Kendra Sheppard, MD, MSPH, CMD, Publisher  
Jennifer Hayes, Executive Editor  
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The Alabama Medical Directors Association (ALMDA) is the professional association of physicians and other professionals practicing in the long-term care continuum and is dedicated to excellence in patient care by providing education, advocacy, information and professional development.

*The articles contained in ALMDA News & Notes are meant to provoke thought and comment and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the members, Executive Council or staff of the Alabama Medical Directors Association. Comments and letters to the editor are welcome.*

# ALMDA 2016 Mid Winter Conference

Hyatt Regency Birmingham • The Wynfrey Hotel • Saturday, January 30

## Agenda

### 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Meeting of the ALMDA Board of Directors, ALNHA's executives, ALAA executives and the ALDPH Medical Director Advisory Committee in the Avon Room.

### 8:00 a.m. - 8:55 a.m.

Registration, Strolling Breakfast with Exhibitors and Poster Viewing

### 9:00 a.m. - 9:05 a.m.

Welcome – Kendra Sheppard, MD, MSPH, CMD  
ALMDA President

### 9:05 a.m. - 10:05 a.m.

Polypharmacy and Reducing Prescriptions in the Nursing Home  
– Joel C. Bolen, MD, Private Practice  
*Learning Objective: Review the importance of and methods for reducing polypharmacy in long-term care patients.*

### 10:05 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.

ALF/SCALF Survey Process – W.T. Geary, MD, Medical Director, ADPH Bureau of Health Provider Standards

*Learning Objective: Create a greater understanding of the state survey process in assisted living facilities.*

### 11:05 a.m. - 11:35 a.m.

Break with Exhibitors and Poster Viewing

### 11:35 a.m. - 12:35 p.m.

Advanced Directives and DNR  
Kenny W. Keith, MSN, JD,  
Health Care Practice Group, Gilpin Givhan PC  
*Learning Objective: Recognize the ethical and legal environments regarding advanced care planning and “do not resuscitate” orders.*

### 12:35 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch with Exhibitors and Poster Judging

### 1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

ALMDA membership meeting and  
Poster Contest Announcements

### 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Management of the Spinal Cord Injured in the Long Term Setting – James T. Barnett Jr., MD,  
The Psychiatry Group

*Learning Objective: Explore the needs and management of the spinal cord injured patient in both sub-acute and long-term care.*

### 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Behavioral Health and Readmissions  
Liz Prosch, BSN, MSHA, NHA,  
Vice President for Quality at AQAF

*Learning Objective: Learn and review methods to reduce hospital readmissions from nursing homes related to behavioral health.*

### 3:30 p.m.

Adjourn

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To reserve a room at the Hyatt Regency call (205) 705-1234 or go online to <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/almedwinter2016>. Rates begin at \$133.

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If you have special needs or need assistance, please contact Jill Smith at (334) 596-0663 or [jsmith@masalink.org](mailto:jsmith@masalink.org).

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## Accreditation Statement

This live activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providorship of AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine and the Alabama Medical Directors Association. AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (provider number 0004453) is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

## Designation Statement

AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine designates this live activity for a maximum of 5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*<sup>™</sup>. Physicians should claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.