

Bethesda Exceeds National Standards in Staffing Ratings

Bethesda Health Group has earned some very impressive ratings in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Five-Star Rating System, especially in the area of staffing.

The system, which began posting ratings in 2008, is designed to help consumers and families compare quality among skilled nursing communities on a state-by-state basis.

The overall rating given to a skilled nursing community is based on three measures:

- health inspections ratings that assess data from the last three years of onsite inspections
- a staffing rating encompassing the number of hours of care provided on average to each resident every day
- quality measures on physical and clinical measures for residents.

Each measure has its own five-star rating component.

According to **Kiel Peregrin**, Corporate Vice President, Long Term Care, **all six Bethesda skilled nursing communities have exceeded the norm by scoring at least a 4, if not a 5, in the staffing measure in recent CMS reports.**

The average national rating is three stars.



Members of the Bethesda Southgate nursing team review patient charts. Bethesda Southgate is one of the Bethesda skilled nursing communities that earned a 5-star rating in staffing levels in recent CMS reports.

The CMS target number for skilled nursing communities receiving this highest rating is just 10%, but Kiel says CMS “raises the bar every year” in terms of standards, making the Bethesda result that much more impressive.

The measures have a direct bearing on care. Kiel points out that sufficient staffing, for example, reduces medical errors, resident complications and mortality. “It also shortens the time it takes to provide care, because an adequate number of staff are available to attend to the needs of the resident,” Kiel says.

According to Kiel, the high CMS ratings for Bethesda are a result of Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement meetings, which are held monthly at each Bethesda skilled nursing community. At these meetings, an interdisciplinary team comprised of the Administrator, Medical Director, Director of Nursing, pharmacy consultant, dietitian, and other department leaders address the current needs at that specific community.

“The exemplary staffing rating coincides with the Bethesda mission, which is to be the premier provider of care and services for seniors,” Kiel says. ■

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Poelker, Zinkls Named 2018 Norwood Award Honorees

On June 12, Bethesda honored **Al Poelker**, and **Charlene** and **Bob Zinkl** with the prestigious Norwood Award, an honor created by the Bethesda Board in 1998 to recognize individuals who have provided extraordinary support and service to the organization.

Al recently retired after 28 years serving Bethesda in many top management positions. Al was the first Administrator at Bethesda Meadow. He also served as a Senior Vice President leading Senior Living; Long-Term Care, Home Health and Hospice, and Strategic Development.

The Zinkls have been extremely active volunteering at Bethesda Dilworth since 2010. Charlene has served as President of the Bethesda Dilworth Auxiliary; she currently serves as Vice President. She volunteers most Tuesdays in the Bethesda Boutique, and set up the first library at Bethesda Dilworth. The library has since been downsized, but Charlene keeps the current library organized and functional.

Bob staffs the Hydration Cart for the residents and performs with the “Ding-a-lings” singing group for the residents on Thursdays during lunch.



Bob and Charlene Zinkl beam with pride after receiving the 2018 Norwood Award.



Al Poelker celebrates his 2018 Norwood Award with (l-r) daughter Katelyn, wife Julie and daughter Lauren.

“These are tremendous individuals who have made Bethesda part of their family, and vice versa, and as a result have made a remarkable difference in the lives of those we serve,” says **Joe Brinker**, President & CEO. ■

New Budget Reflects Increases in Medicaid Reimbursement for Senior Organizations

During the last few months, Missouri legislators received numerous phone calls, text messages and emails, urging them to vote to “Bridge the Gap” and increase the Medicaid reimbursement provided to senior care and service organizations.

Many of those contacts were part of a concentrated campaign coordinated through LeadingAge Missouri and involved senior organizations across the state, including employees and residents from Bethesda.

On June 29, Missouri Governor Mike Parson approved the budget for Fiscal Year 2019, which reflected increases to Medicaid reimbursement for seniors:

- an increase of \$8.30 per day for skilled nursing patients



The effort by Bethesda residents and staff who lobbied our legislators in Jefferson City to “Bridge the Gap” paid off, as Medicaid reimbursement for seniors increased in the fiscal 2019 budget.

and residents (a \$25 million budget increase for the state of Missouri)

- the restoration of half of the previous year’s budget cut for Home and Community Based Services’ Medicaid providers (a 1.5% budget increase)

“This is wonderful news, but our work in this effort must continue,”

says **Joe Brinker**, Bethesda President and CEO. “Even with the increases, Missouri remains among the lowest in the country in state budget allocations for senior Medicaid reimbursement. Once the legislature begins addressing the allocations to the Fiscal 2020 Missouri budget, the campaign for additional reform will begin.” ■

Hearts for Our Homes Campaign Raises More than \$138,000

After numerous weeks of planning and coordinating special events, the Bethesda Health Group Foundation announced a total accumulation of more than \$138,000 raised for the 2018 *Hearts for Our Homes* fundraising campaign.

According to **Pam Dempski**, Corporate V.P. and Director of the Foundation, the annual campaign truly is a “labor of love” for Bethesda’s dedicated campaign ambassadors/boosters, employees, residents and families—all who gave generously and worked diligently to make the spring fundraiser a success.

Support of the *Hearts for Our Homes* campaign benefits seniors living at each of our communities who have exhausted their financial resources and can no longer pay for services. In 2017, Bethesda provided more than \$14 million in uncompensated charitable assistance, or Humanitarian Care, for our seniors.

The campaign includes a friendly rivalry between the employees, volunteers and residents and their families who live, work and support each of the Bethesda businesses. The highly coveted traveling trophy is awarded to the community or service that has the best fundraising results.

The final activity of the campaign, the Trivia competition, often determines the winner of the trophy. More than 200 people attended, including an entire table of residents from Bethesda Orchard.



Members of the Bethesda Corporate team present at the Trivia Night celebrate their winning of the HFOH traveling trophy.

This year, a team of employees from **Barnes-Jewish Extended Care**, dressed as Ninja Turtles, won both the Trivia contest and Best Decorated Table.

However, it was the staff of the **Corporate** office who claimed overall victory and possession of the coveted trophy.

“What a great way to wrap up *Hearts for Our Homes* and raise funds for seniors. I hope I never



The Ninja Turtle-clad team from Barnes-Jewish Extended Care won the trivia contest.

have to use the John W. Rowe Humanitarian Care Fund, but I’m glad to know it is there in case I do!” said **Jim Kurt**, Bethesda Orchard resident and one of the trivia players.

Special thanks to everyone who supported *Hearts for Our Homes* and the organizational sponsors and businesses (see adjacent page) who donated in-kind items for the Trivia auction! ■

2018 Tax Savings Using Your IRA

The government requires U.S. citizens aged 70½ or older who have a traditional IRA account to withdraw a minimum amount, called a required minimum distribution (RMD), and pay income taxes on it every year.

This amount could be excluded from a taxpayer’s taxable income if paid directly to charity.

Gifting all or a portion of an RMD can be a very beneficial tax-savings strategy for many seniors, especially for those who do not itemize deductions. Instead of writing a check, transferring securities or using a credit card for charitable giving, many seniors

are using their IRAs to serve as a charitable donation.

Individuals may gift a charity up to \$100,000 annually from an IRA; the money is “counted” as the RMD but is not included in the adjusted gross income. The one requirement—the funds must come directly from your IRA to a qualified charity.

To make a generous gift to Bethesda using your IRA, contact the Foundation or your financial advisor, who can help you make sure that the financial institution executes the transfer correctly.

For more information, please contact the Foundation at 314-800-1916. ■

2018 Hearts for Our Homes In-Kind Donors

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Recognizing Good People Doing Good Things

Jeanette Estopare



Jeanette Estopare

The hard-working employees who sit at the front desks of Bethesda communities have an important position. They are the smiling faces who first greet guests and residents and, in many cases, answer a multitude of questions.

This is true for **Jeanette Estopare**, who does more than serve as a greeter and answer person at Bethesda

Orchard. For more than 16 years, Jeanette has served as the "go to" person upon who residents and staff have come to rely each day.

Jeanette takes the time to accommodate just about any request, ranging from making copies to managing apartment and office affairs. Jeanette's knowledge and ability to organize was instrumental in keeping Bethesda Orchard operating smoothly during the hiring process of **Todd Meury**, Bethesda Orchard's new General Manager.

"Any issue or emergency that arises at Bethesda Orchard will almost always have Jeanette's input or direct response," Todd says. "Her work has no boundaries. Her hands-on approach is appreciated by our residents and management. When I'm out of the building, I know that residents are taken care of, and any issues that arise are handled promptly and professionally, thanks to Jeanette."

The Bethesda Health Group Foundation recognizes Jeanette Estopare as "Good People Doing Good Things." If you know of a Bethesda employee going "above and beyond," contact the Foundation at pedempski@bethesdahealth.org or call 314-800-1981. ■

Coates Earns National Award

When Bethesda Hawthorne Place opened in January 31, 2017, the arduous challenge that **Lea Ann Coates** had accepted months ago had officially begun.

As Residency Counselor, it was Lea Ann’s job to fill the

58-bed Assisted Living and Memory Support community with residents. She had to create interest through innovative outreach programs, and encourage those seniors who were interested, and their families, that Bethesda Hawthorne Place would meet their needs and provide them with a great place to live.

Her challenge—an expectation that this goal would be achieved in only 18 months. However, after hours upon hours of hard work and effective strategy developed in tandem between her and Greystone, a senior living consulting group that works with clients throughout the United

States, Lea Ann had achieved her census goal in only five months!

Due to her overwhelming success, Lea Ann was named **“Health Services Sales Counselor of the Year”** by Greystone at its annual sales conference.

“Lea Ann’s tremendous achievement and success not only helped Bethesda’s revenue stream but was vital to developing the culture of Bethesda Hawthorne Place—one of comfort, security and a wonderful place to live,” said **Roger Byrne**, Bethesda’s Executive Vice President and CFO. “She earned this, and all of us at Bethesda are thrilled for her.” ■



Lea Ann Coates poses with her award.

Design Awards for Bethesda Hawthorne Place

The interior design work that gives Bethesda Hawthorne Place its beautiful yet comfortable look and feel is being recognized and securing multiple honors.

Spellman, Brady & Co., serves as Bethesda’s interior design partner, including the Bethesda Hawthorne Place project.

“When creating the look and feel for Bethesda Hawthorne Place, we pursued a transitional design with clean lines and pops of colors,” says **Alicia Nicolay**, the senior interior designer who worked on the project. “We wanted to be sure that we stayed within the Bethesda style that we had achieved on previous projects while providing a classic, sophisticated feel.”

The result was a beautiful, comfortable array of apartments and common areas for the residents and visitors to Bethesda Hawthorne Place.

The success of the design effort has been rewarded in the EFA Design Showcase, where Spellman Brady earned top honors in the assisted living/memory care division.

And in June, Spellman Brady learned that its nomination into the Senior Living category in the Shaw Carpet Design Awards competition earned first place, and was chosen ahead of more than 500 competitive entries!

“We are very pleased for the success that Spellman Brady has enjoyed in its award nominations



This 2nd-floor sitting room is an example of the beautiful interior design and finishing work that adorns Bethesda Hawthorne Place.

featuring Bethesda Hawthorne Place,” says **Lisa Reynolds**, Executive Director of Bethesda Hawthorne Place. “We are honored that they chose our community to feature, and invite them to continue using us however they can!” ■



Cleelands “Reign” at July 4 Parade

In conjunction with Valentine’s Day, **Norman and Ann Cleeland** were crowned “King and Queen” of Bethesda Orchard. As a result of that honor, Norman and Ann rode in the Bethesda Orchard “float” in the annual Webster Groves July 4 parade, during which 80 floats and bands follow a two-mile route and annually attracts thousands of parade watchers. ■



Bethesda Dilworth Hosts “Rehab Reunion”

Former rehab & therapy patients **Susie Mallory** (front left), **Donna Kassebaum** (front, second from left) and **James McMillan** (front, second from right), visit with their former inpatient therapists at the June 19 Bethesda Dilworth “Rehab Reunion.” Each of the attendees returned to their own homes after completing their rehabilitation. ■

Commemorating Memorial Day

Bethesda Terrace resident Lou Cammarata lights a candle as part of the Memorial Day ceremony to honor and remember those who served our country. Similar ceremonies to commemorate the holiday were held at many of the Bethesda senior communities during the Memorial Day weekend. ■



Village North Participates in Senior Fair

Kate Smith, Director of Nursing at Village North Health Center, provides information to a fairgoer attending the Christian Hospital Senior Fair as Referral Coordinator **Renee Cwiklowski** looks on. More than 250 people attended the first annual fair. Administrator **Wade Hachman**, Nurse Manager **Melissa Kurrus**, and Provider Relations Manager **Cathy Barton** also staffed the Village North table. ■



Did You Know...

... that in the not-too-distant future Bethesda will have completed all negotiations and will have secured contracts to accept both Humana and Blue Cross Blue Shield insurances?

... that one of the Bethesda Home and Community Based Services is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2018? (Hint: it is Home Health!)

... that the employees added to the President's Roundtable and the recipients of the 2018 Mary June King scholarship have been selected?

Information on these and other Bethesda initiatives and stories will be included in the Fall 2018 edition of the *Pulse*. ■

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2018 Hospice Walk... Hot and Successful!

The heat of a June morning in 2018 did not keep more than 150 walkers/runners and volunteers from gathering at Queeny Park to participate in the 6th Annual Bethesda Hospice Care 5K/1K Memorial Walk/Run. As per usual, all participants wore ribbons in memory of their loved ones while they walked/ran, which were then pinned to a memorial wreath once they finished. ■



Bethesda Terrace resident **Bob Hynes** (right) and members of his family prepare to participate in the walk. Bob was walking in memory of his beloved wife, **Delores**.



The park's paths were lined with walkers participating in the annual Bethesda Hospice Care Run/Walk.



Brenda Fiala (front left), and her family participate in the 2018 Hospice Care Walk in memory of her father, mother and husband.