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December 2008

Dear Member,

The Northern New England Association of Homes & Services for the Aging (*NNEAHSA*) is very proud of its affiliation with the American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging (*AAHSA*), and the ability that this relationship affords us to provide our members with outstanding national advocacy, education and networking opportunities. At the state level, you are assured of receiving exceptional representation from NNEAHSA's leadership and advocates on regulatory and legislative matters of importance, and educational programs that address all levels of provider care, from staff to the boardroom. Nationally, AAHSA enjoys a well-deserved reputation as one of the most active, well-respected and forward-thinking associations in the country in support of its mission and on behalf of its thousands of provider members. AAHSA's leadership and staff work closely with The White House, congressional and regulatory leaders, as well as collaboratively with other associations, to ensure that all of its members have a seat at the table in the public policy arena.

Here are just some of the highlights of what your state and national associations have accomplished on your behalf in 2008:

### **STATE ADVOCACY**

#### **MAINE**

- ✓ The Maine Legislative Committee met regularly with representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services on behalf of NNEAHSA members to ensure that members have a voice at the table and to assure the Department of NNEAHSA's desire to actively participate in defining balanced solutions to the future of our field.
- ✓ In this past legislative session, the committee's focus was on monitoring and impacting the following budgetary concerns:
  - Residential Care: advocated for full reimbursement of increasing energy costs under the State Cost Report process and worked to attempt to minimize the impact of the limitations placed on PNMI bed hold MaineCare reimbursement in the Supplemental State Budget;
  - Nursing Care Providers: supported the state's rebasing initiative; and
  - Cost of Living Adjustments: advocated for COLAs for each eligible level of service, while considering Maine's budget limitations.

#### **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

- ✓ Rejuvenated the NNEAHSA New Hampshire Advocacy Committee and established a bi-weekly schedule of conference calls to maximize member participation.
- ✓ Helped abolish a bill that would have capped charges by health care providers to the average amount received for services to patients covered by HMOs.
- ✓ Helped abolish a bill that would mandate that work-related travel time be reimbursed at the employee's regular rate of pay.
- ✓ Helped abolish a bill that would have eliminated at-will employment in New Hampshire.
- ✓ Helped amend a bill that would have required health care providers to restrict access to certain portions of a patient's record upon request of the patient.
- ✓ Helped limit the impact of a bill that expands the scope of mandatory criminal background checks of health care employees.
- ✓ Helped delay a bill that would require health care providers to submit "dummy claims" for services provided to the un- and under-insured.
- ✓ Helped amend a bill to create a commission to study employee incentives for direct care providers in the home and community-based delivery system.
- ✓ Continued to monitor and/or participate in workgroups studying community benefits, disposal of medical sharps, privacy of medical records, dummy claims for un- and under-insured, employee incentives for direct care workers and age-based driver renewal testing.

**VERMONT**

- ✓ Secured a \$100,000 appropriation to support a housing demonstration project managed by a NNEAHSA member.
- ✓ Secured a \$660,000 appropriation to provide a \$2 per day rate increase for the Medicaid assistive community care services providers.
- ✓ Legislation passed protecting health care and public safety personnel from communicable diseases.
- ✓ Legislation passed creating a working group focused on renewal of the Choices for Care Waiver.

**STATE EDUCATION, NETWORKING and COMMUNICATIONS**

- ✓ Held a successful Annual Meeting in March, Annual Conference in May and Leadership Forum in October, all of which offered continuing education credits and networking opportunities for members on such diverse topics as leadership, human resources, marketing, dining, disaster preparedness, technology, clinical care, fundraising, board development and more.
- ✓ Began collaborating with the New York Association of Homes & Services to the Aging to offer NNEAHSA members the opportunity to participate in exceptional, cost-effective audio seminars on pertinent and timely topics.
- ✓ Attended meetings with other New England AAHSA affiliates to discuss ways in which our neighboring states can work together to offer additional educational and networking opportunities for members.
- ✓ Established a program for the association’s leadership and staff to meet with members on a regular basis in order to hear first-hand how NNEAHSA can better assist its members in meeting the challenges they are facing in these critical regulatory and economic times.
- ✓ Reinstated a monthly E-News Bulletin for members with information about educational programs, member news, introductions to Business Members, AAHSA initiatives, products and services, and more.
- ✓ Participated in AAHSA State Executive meetings and the State Executive orientation to continue to grow the working relationship and collaborative efforts with colleagues from other state affiliates as well as the national association.

**AAHSA ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

We are very pleased to also share with you a summary of AAHSA’s Accomplishments for 2008, which is enclosed. Please be sure to read the section on the “Five Big Ideas,” developed to encapsulate AAHSA’s major policy agenda topics. These ideas are based on accumulated beliefs, experiences and successes of members who are developing innovative programs that have broad policy implications. They were designed to advance *Quality First* and reflect AAHSA’s research, advocacy and leadership agenda. In 2008, AAHSA did much to advance these ideas and move forward its quest to create the future of aging services.

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With this as a backdrop, we hope that you are enjoying and taking advantage of the programs, products and services that are offered through your state and national associations, and that we may have the privilege of continuing to represent you in 2009. We are again pleased to offer our members a 5% discount to the NNEAHSA portion of dues if the enclosed invoice is paid by January 31, 2009!

Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, and we always welcome your comments and suggestions, and certainly your participation, as we fulfill our mission to promote the interests of not-for-profit members in Maine and New Hampshire which provide healthy, affordable and ethical long-term care to our older citizens.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Denise M. Vachon  
Chairperson

Rosemary L. Goedel  
Director of Member Services and Communications