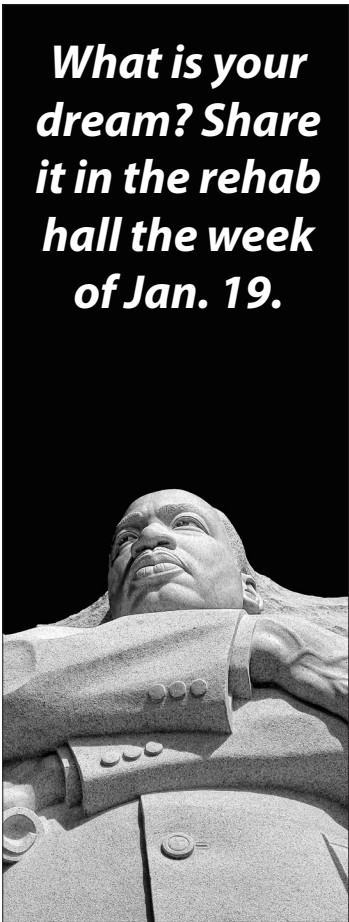
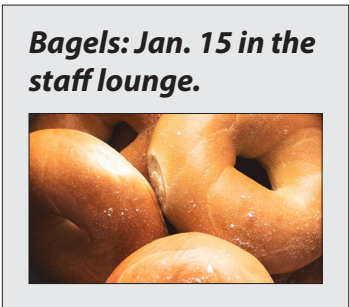




The PULSE



What is your dream? Share it in the rehab hall the week of Jan. 19.



Bagels: Jan. 15 in the staff lounge.

FROM THE CEO

What to know (and do) about nursing home closures

Nineteen skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers have closed in the state of Washington since 2017, according to the Washington Health Care Association. That number, which shows a rapid acceleration from previous years, is expected to increase in years to come.

The care center closures have had significant impacts on families and vulnerable populations. For example:

- The closure of the Seattle Keiro skilled nursing facility in October 2019 displaced 115 older adults and 280 staff members.
- The January 2020 closure of the Ida Culver House skilled nursing facility will impact 53 older adults and 147 staff members.
- The only nursing home on Vashon Island – Vashon Community Care Center – recently converted from skilled nursing to assisted living. That conversion forced some residents to find placement on the mainland.

Why are skilled nursing centers closing at a time when the baby boomer population is in dire need of medical and long-term care? Frankly, it has more to do with economics than the needs of humans.

According to the nursing home industry in Washington state, the closures are the result of capped Medicaid rates and ever-increasing expenses related to delivering care.

Nearly 70 percent of the patients in skilled nursing facilities rely on the state Medicaid program, yet the state's reimbursement rates for delivering care are so inadequate that facilities are being forced to close.

Experienced CEOs and skilled nurs-



by Patrick O'Neill
CEO

Please see Closures on Page 4



Like or share CHCC's Facebook posts with your friends and family to help others learn about job openings, volunteer opportunities, donation requests and more.

facebook.com/christianhealthcare

FUNDRAISERS

Jingle Bell Joy

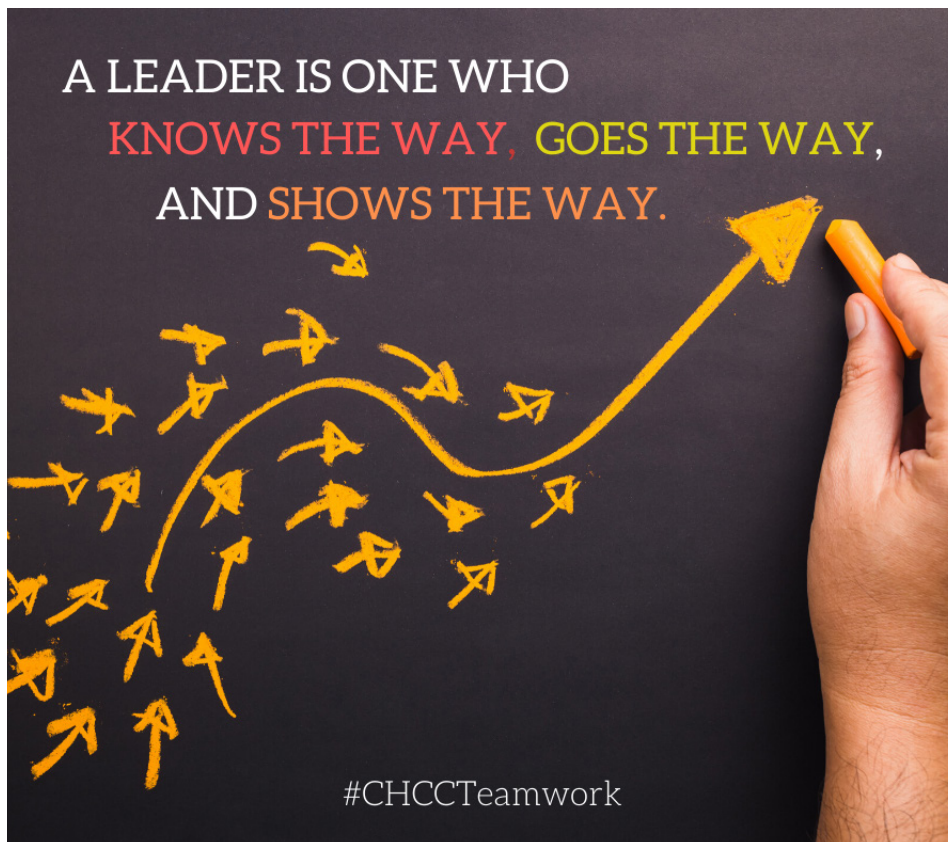


At the 2019 Jingle Bell Run, Christian Health Care Center had 26 people show up! All together, the CHCC team raised \$835 for the Arthritis Foundation, not including what the board donated. Thank you, everyone, for your wonderful participation and support of those in our community who need it! #CHCCTeamwork

ACTIVITIES

Therapy animals visit CHCC

We are so thankful for our friends at Animals as Natural Therapy! They visited with more than 100 of the individuals who live here recently, allowing them to enjoy the company of a miniature horse, rabbits and a dog. What a sweet joy for our residents! Visit the CHCC Facebook page for more photos.



HOLIDAYS

REFRESH: A few everyday reminders

- All items in the hallways must be moved every 30 minutes: med carts, hoymers, etc.
- All materials must be farther than 18 inches from any sprinkler head. This includes items on top of shelves, closets and cupboards. Nothing must ever be placed on top of wardrobe closets or over bed lights or Ptacs (heaters).
- Remember that red outlets are connected to the regular electrical supply and to CHCC generator power. If there is a power outage, the CHCC generators will turn on automatically.
- Emergency kits are stored in the med room at each nurses' station. These kits are used during power and/or utility outages.

Secret Santas



Thank you to everyone who participated in the Secret Santa gift exchange at CHCC this year! We had an absolute blast sharing food, laughs and gifts together. If you didn't get a chance to join in the fun this year, we hope you'll be able to during Christmas 2020.

LEADERSHIP TIPS

Writing advice: When to use capital letters

[*Editor's note: This leadership tip comes from PR Consulting, CHCC's partner for communications and marketing.]*

Whether you're writing a memo for fellow team members, posting on social media or crafting an email to a colleague, good grammar is important. You want to be consistent in how you present information, and you want to be understood.

In this leadership tip, we'll talk about when to use capital letters for job titles and departments at Christian Health Care Center.

First, some general usage notes. The AP Stylebook, which we use as our guide for most of the writing we do, offers this advice: "In general, avoid unnecessary capi-

als. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles listed here." It then goes on to recommend consulting the AP Stylebook and the dictionary for specific examples.

These are the basic rules to follow at CHCC:

Job titles

The capitalization rules for job titles are generally to use capital letters when an official title is used directly before a name, but to use lowercase letters when the title is used after a name.

Examples: *Medical Records Coordinator Katie Taylor delivered a presentation. Katie Taylor, the medical records coordinator, delivered a presentation.*

Note that unless the title is an official title used right before the name, it should take lowercase let-

ters. A couple more examples: *The medical records coordinator, Katie Taylor, delivered a presentation. That recognition was given to van driver Bill Davis.*

In general, it's easiest to construct sentences so that the title appears after the name, thus obviating the question of whether the title requires capitalization.

Department names

At CHCC, we tend not to capitalize the names of various departments within the organization. So, we might refer to the resident accounts department, environmental services, human resources, nursing services, admissions, etc. Note also that words such as *office*, *department* and *services* also are in lower case, whether or not they are used with the name. When in doubt, opt for lowercase letters.

What is person-centered care?

The Royal College of Nursing in London has a great definition: "Being person-centred is about focusing care on the needs of the person rather than the needs of the service. Most people who need health care these days aren't happy just to sit back and let health care staff do what they think is best. They have their own views on what's best for them and their own priorities in life. So as health care workers, we have to be flexible to meet their needs – we have to make our system suit them, rather than the other way round." Read more at <https://rcni.com/hosted-content/rcn/first-steps/what-person-centred-care-means>



Need something from a past issue of The Pulse? You can find them online at chcclynden.org/about/the-pulse.

COFFEE & MUFFINS: JAN. 9, STAFF LOUNGE



CLOSURES

Continued from Page 1

ing administrators are finding it increasingly difficult to balance expenses with income in the care centers they manage.

For example, in recent years, Washington state voters approved a series of escalating minimum wage increases. On Jan. 1, 2020, minimum wage rates will increase again, this time by 12 percent.

At the same time, Medicaid reimbursement rates – government funding for healthcare services provided to lower-income individuals – have not increased to align with wage increases. The Medicaid reimbursement rates currently being paid to nursing homes were last rebalanced on July 1, 2018, and that rebalance was based on 2016 cost reports.

Not many business models can thrive in situations in which expenses increase significantly while income numbers remain flat.

The 12-percent wage increase in Washington state will ripple dramatically through all industries, including skilled nursing care centers.

At Christian Health Care Center (CHCC) in Lynden, for example, the impending January 2020 wage increase has already led to higher expenses related to supply vendors and service providers – from lawn care to food service. CHCC also needed to raise wages for experienced patient care staff in 2019 to help with recruitment and retention in a highly competitive job market.

Again, the Medicaid rates re-

mained capped.

Industry advocates, such as LeadingAge Washington are doing what they can to bring about change in Washington state. They are proposing changes to legislation that would require annual “rebasing” of the direct and indirect costs of delivering care, an action that could help stabilize Washington’s skilled nursing industry in 2020.

Pressures in the skilled nursing industry are at a critical level. A coalition of stakeholders has formed to raise awareness of this issue. We really need the public’s help to advocate for eldercare.

“We really need the public’s help to advocate for eldercare.”

Patrick O’Neill
CHCC CEO

Anyone who is involved in the skilled nursing industry – staff, residents, volunteers, family members, vendors, concerned community members – can engage in this process by encouraging lawmakers to

fix the Medicaid reimbursement rate problem.

An online form has been created to make it easy to contact Washington state legislators who have the power to make a change. Please share your feedback and ask elected officials to address this issue via this online form at chcclynden.org.

In the meantime, CHCC will continue doing what we do to the best of our abilities, shifting and adjusting to the market as needed.

The board of directors and leadership team at our nonprofit remain fiercely dedicated to the stewardship of Christian Health Care Center. Every day, we work hard to be fiscally responsive so CHCC can serve our community, as it has since 1956, for decades to come.