

## Hope Amidst Uncertainty

“Once you choose hope, anything’s possible.”

— Christopher Reeve

Since the beginning of the new year, we have been challenged by new variants in the COVID-19 virus and we continue to deal with the unpredictable nature of the pandemic. To further add to those challenges, we now face tremendous upheaval and instability in the peace that we work toward achieving in our homes, our communities, and in our world. Throughout the coming year, we plan to offer educational events that will explore ways to deal with the many issues we face, despite the lack of predictability in our world. On a positive note, we’re excited to be planning our annual conference, which is scheduled for October 6th as a live, in-person event for the first time since 2019. We remain hopeful that our plans will come to fruition, and we can come together in person as we move forward toward healing. I welcome you to share any thoughts you may have regarding topics that would be most meaningful to you as we plan the content of the conference.

It’s safe to say that we have all learned a great deal during the past two years. We continue to live with hope for better days and it will be a welcome change to use those lessons as we plan activities in response to possible changes in guidance. During the first half of this year, we will continue to use virtual formats to bring educational events to you. Our first major event will be the annual Nurses and Clinical Coordinators Training, which will be held on April 14th. Registration is open for that, so I encourage you to register and to take advantage of our early-bird pricing, which is effective through March 17th. The agenda is filled with interesting topics and updates that will be valuable to all who strive for improvement in care and identifying best practices in providing that care. You may register [here](#) for this popular annual training event. While it’s called Nurses and Clinical Coordinators Training, staff in various roles from Executive Director, to activities, sales and marketing, and operations can also benefit from this training by having a better understanding of the clinical and care-giving roles and current issues.

In the last edition of The Voice, I provided information about the development of the QA/QI Training Program. As an update, under 651 CMR 12:04:10, assisted living residences are required to establish a QA/QI program “...to evaluate its operations and services to continuously improve services and operations, and to assure Resident health, safety, and welfare.”

Some time ago, Mass-ALA developed the Assisted Living Quality Improvement Tool: [A Tool to Assist with Regulatory Compliance and Quality Improvement](#). This “Tool” has been an effective document in addressing operational issues in assisted living residences and aiding in the achievement and maintenance of high operating standards. It was intended, at its inception, to provide a format to assist

ALRs in improving operations and monitoring compliance with regulations set forth by the state. As we planned our educational efforts and events for the coming year, we decided to begin 2022 with a strong effort to update “the Tool” to assist in identifying operational areas that may require further exploration, improvement, or recognition for excellence. Several modifications have been made over the years as the document was designed to be adaptive and flexible.

I’m pleased to announce that the planned update of “*the Tool*” has been completed and is being used for the development of the new QA/QI Training Program. This series is currently under development and will take a deep dive into the details of many issues, beginning with initial screenings and assessments, going into departmental requirements related to QA/QI, staffing/staffing levels, training requirements, plant maintenance, all facets of operational concerns, reporting requirements, safety, risk management, and much more. Where Boot Camp leaves off in providing an extensive overview of important operational information, the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Training Program will pick up and provide the details in a systematic approach that will be relevant, easy to follow, and immediately applicable to the operation of an assisted living residence. Stay tuned for more information on this valuable training program to be offered soon.

As always, I invite you to reach out with any suggestions you might have on topics you’d like to see offered that will meet the needs of assisted living residents and staff. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas on educational events and topics at [lcashman@mass-ala.org](mailto:lcashman@mass-ala.org).

I offer my best to all as we embrace this new year with hopeful anticipation and a renewed sense of the many possibilities that lie ahead in our industry and in our world.

Warmest regards,

Laurie Cashman