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FAHSA LINK

Dear Bonnie,

Welcome to this week's edition of the **FAHSA Link**.

FAHSA Innovation Exchange Corner Feature: Angel Care -- Care at the End of Life -- FAHSA's Innovation Exchange Program provides members with an opportunity to share ideas and best practices with others and to recognize their staff for extraordinary performance. Through the LINK, we hope to encourage more members to share what they do best and to increase awareness about the Innovation Exchange Web site, an important but little known resource. This month, we are showcasing "Angels Passing By," an award winning program started in March of 1999 by Bon Secours in St. Petersburg to provide comfort to nursing home residents who are dying.

The Sisters of Bon Secours have a core set of beliefs of care at the end of life. It is a very special part of who and what they are. The main goal of the program is that no one should die alone. If possible, someone remains with the resident at all times during the last days of his or her life. This person may sit silently at the bedside, play music, pray with the person or comfort a spouse or family member. Volunteers and staff participate in the program. Recently, the program has expanded into also using trained 11th hour volunteers from Hospice of the Florida Suncoast if the resident is also on hospice.

To read more about "Angels Passing By," please visit the [FAHSA Innovation Exchange](#) Website online.

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A Time to Reflect on 2007 - As we begin the New Year, the time is right to thank FAHSA members for their dedication and commitment to elders and their contributions to our Association. It is also a time to reflect on the past and plan for the future.

In 2007, the FAHSA Board embarked on an ambitious agenda with the goal of improving member services and products and enhancing our efficiency as an association. As a result, we made a number of major changes that will benefit you.

- FAHSA will begin periodic regional meetings for members in late February. The meetings will consist of a free educational program followed by a roundtable discussion for each member type. Continuing education credit will be available at no cost. The only charge will be for lunch. Please see your FAHSA calendar and look at the FAHSA Web site for dates.
- We have laid the groundwork to hold a conference call with members at the end of each week during the 2008 Legislative Session. The call will be used to update members on budget and policy proposals under consideration by lawmakers.
- "Distance Learning" is the wave of the future and FAHSA is leading the way. To increase affordable educational options for your employees, FAHSA initiated monthly Web-based educational programs on a wide variety of topics. We held six Web seminars in 2007 with 12 more planned for 2008. The sessions got rave reviews. We have several "group discount" options so many of your staff can participate without leaving your campus!
- As a result of our efforts, the Board of Nursing Home Administrators now recognizes Web-based educational programming when calculating continuing education credit, making it consistent with other boards such as the Board of Nursing and the Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Counseling and Mental Health Counseling.
- FAHSA signed a contract for implementing a new Internet-based membership management system. The new system will provide members the flexibility to modify their own demographic information, pay dues online and search an up-to-the-minute membership directory. A new look and numerous structural and visual improvements will be incorporated into the new Website. Members will be able to manage their own passwords and participate in special member forums.
- FAHSA opened its membership to include Home and Community-Based Service providers. We held our first annual Home and Community-Based Service Workshop in September. Over 80 people attended.
- Our Preferred Business Associates (PBA) program continues to grow and improve. We now have 23 PBAs that offer a wide variety of services and products to members at discounted prices. We are also doing more to educate members about our PBA program and the financial value of participating in the program.
- The first week of each month, we are highlighting an idea from FAHSA's *Innovation Exchange Program* in the LINK. We hope that by showcasing what members do best, more people will participate in the *Innovation Exchange*. We now have 45 creative programs or practices that were implemented by FAHSA member organizations posted on the [Innovation Exchange Web site](#). Some may be worth duplicating in your organization. Please check out the site.

In addition, the FAHSA staff provided countless hours of technical assistance to individual members, transmitted timely regulatory information and guidance through our weekly E-newsletter (The Link) and educational workshops, and ably represented you before the legislature and regulatory agencies. As far as public policy is concerned, the 2007 Legislative Session was a success for the Association. We had an ambitious agenda that was developed with input from our public policy committee members. Bills or amendments were filed on our behalf to address problems related to *Florida Senior Care*, the Elderly Housing Community Loan Program, HMO subscriber rights when the subscriber lives in a full-service retirement community, and the safekeeping of the belongings of a deceased tenant under the Florida Landlord Tenant Act. In addition, FAHSA played a major role in advocating for reasonable reimbursement rates for nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

We expect that 2008 will be an especially challenging year. Governor Crist has announced that he will continue to push for additional cuts in property taxes and property insurance. While these are laudable priorities, good intentions sometimes have unintended consequences that are not so good. Therefore, we are monitoring all tax reform activity to ensure that proposals do not adversely affect FAHSA members. Meanwhile, the Legislature is dealing with a budget deficit that increases by the month - right now estimated as \$2.4 billion! The housing market, the main culprit, is not expected to improve anytime soon. So, funding cuts will definitely be on the table when the Legislature starts budget committee meetings in January -- if not before.

The good news is that you have an outstanding association to represent your interests. We also have dedicated members who are willing to take the time to participate in our grassroots advocacy efforts to educate lawmakers about long-term care and senior housing. Together, we will take on the challenges that the New Year brings to ensure that you can continue to fulfill your mission to provide the best possible care and services to elder Floridians.

District and Membership News



Martin Goetz Celebrates 30-Year Anniversary -- River Garden Hebrew Home Wolfson Health and Aging Center is proud to announce Marty's 30-year anniversary with River Garden. In honor of this great achievement, River Garden has proclaimed January 3, 2008 as "*Marty Goetz Day*". Congratulations Marty!

Corecare Receives National Recognition For MorseLife Publication -- Ian Cordes, president, Corecare Associates, a FAHSA affiliate member, was recently presented with two awards of distinction in The Communicator Awards' 2007 Print Media competition for MorseLife magazine. One award was for overall design; the other was in the nonprofit category.

First Series of FAHSA Regional Meetings Scheduled: Mark your calendar now to participate in this exciting value-added service! -- One of the "Big Ideas" adopted by the FAHSA Board is to hold periodic regional meetings throughout the state to give members an opportunity to network and learn while earning continuing education credit. At each of these meetings, an educational presentation will be featured on a topic that is of interest to all members. In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a roundtable

discussion for their membership type. The first group of regional meetings will feature Morrison Senior Dining's "Voice to the Silent Generation". Please mark your calendar and plan to attend one or all of the meetings at the nearest location. Watch your e-mail for more information.

Upcoming Membership Events:

- **January 8 & 9** - *FAHSA Board of Trustees and Public Policy Committee Meetings*, Boca Raton Resort & Club, Boca Raton
- **February 27** - *Southwest Florida Regional Meeting* (Districts 9, 10, 11 and 12)
11:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., Shell Point Retirement Community, Ft. Myers
- **February 28** - *Central Florida Regional Meeting* (Districts 4, 5, 6, and 13)
11:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., Village on the Green, Longwood
- **February 29** - *North Florida Regional Meeting* (Districts 1, 2, 3, and 14)
11:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., River Garden Hebrew Home for the Aged, Jacksonville
- **April 14** - *FAHSA Board of Trustees Meeting*, Wingate Inn, Tallahassee

[FAHSA Calendar of Events](#)

Education News

FAHSA's 5th Annual Dynamic Directions Advanced Nurse Leadership Workshop will be held on January 15 & 16, 2008 at the Safety Harbor Resort & Spa. Don't miss this opportunity to gain knowledge from the experts. [READ THE BROCHURE](#) and [REGISTER ONLINE](#).

FAHSA's Next Webinar - Medicaid Billing with Florida's New Fiscal Agent, EDS, takes place on January 22. The current Medicaid fiscal agent contract with ACS will end on February 29, 2008. The new fiscal agent, EDS, will begin claims processing on March 1, 2008, so it's important to make this training a part of your "To Do" list. [READ THE BROCHURE](#) and [REGISTER ONLINE](#).

Upcoming Educational Events:

- **January 15 & 16**- *FAHSA's Dynamic Directions Advanced Nurse Leadership Workshop* including QIS Training, Safety Harbor Resort & Spa, Safety Harbor
- **January 22** - Webinar -- *FAHSA's Medicaid Billing with Florida's New Fiscal Agent - EDS*, 2:00 p.m., EST
- **January 29** - Webinar -- *FAHSA's CCRC Occupancy Issues*, 2:00 p.m., EST
- **April 15 & 16** - *FAHSA Legislative Workshop*, Leon County Civic Center, Tallahassee

[FAHSA Calendar of Events](#)

General News

Update on the Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission

The following article was provided by Florida TaxWatch, a consumer watchdog group based in Tallahassee.

After hearing from citizens and taking testimony from a number of experts over the last few

months, the Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission is now getting down to the work of proposed constitutional amendments that the TBRC can take straight to the voters beginning this November.

After a round of meetings on December 14, the Commission took a break for the holidays and will begin voting on proposals in January. Below is a summary of issues under consideration by the TBRC.

Property Taxes: While there has been a lot of discussion on property taxes, the TBRC has been waiting to see what the Legislature did first. Whether or not the January 29 constitutional amendment passes, the Commission will surely consider a number of related proposals, including a possible alternative to the amendment. Commissioner Carlos Lacasa is offering a proposal that he presented at the Florida TaxWatch Annual Meeting. This proposal includes a 5 percent assessment cap for non-homestead property and an exemption for homesteaders worth half their property's value. Other property tax proposals already introduced deal with portability, "highest and best use", and exemptions for renewable energy devices, wind hardening improvements and conservation land.

Streamlined Sales Tax Project: There appears to be widespread support for a proposal that would make Florida fully compliant with the Streamlined Sales Tax Project, a consortium of states working to make collecting sales taxes on remote sales easier on businesses, and therefore more politically feasible. Florida TaxWatch has long recommended this as a way to collect potentially billions of dollars in taxes currently owed the state and to remove a severe competitive disadvantage facing our in-state retailers.

Sales Tax Exemptions and Exclusions Review: There is also considerable support on the Commission to at least review sales tax exemptions and services for potential taxation. There is also considerable debate on how to do it. The most high-profile proposal is one by Commissioner John McKay that would repeal most school property taxes and require the Legislature to make up the \$9 billion by removing exemptions and/or taxing services. The Legislature would have to decide which things to tax.

Another proposal, similar to past TaxWatch recommendations, would create a process for the Legislature to review and vote on every exemption. The full Legislature would have to vote to repeal an exemption for it to cease to exist. Florida TaxWatch research has been quoted extensively in this process and we will continue to work to ensure that any review be done in a deliberative manner, that economic consequences be considered and that a "sunset" provision is not used to repeal exemptions.

Other issues being considered include a review and re-justification process for special districts, changes to the Bright Future Scholarships and the Prepaid Tuition programs, a TABORlike government revenue limit, transportation funding sources and state water policy.

Florida Lawmakers Face \$2.4B Budget Shortfall - A few days before Christmas, fiscal analysts with the Florida Legislature warned lawmakers that the state is facing a \$2.4 billion budget shortfall so there will be little or no funding for local projects. The Legislature cut \$1.1 billion in a special session last year and the regular session, starting in March, will have \$1 billion less to work with for the year starting on July 1. The stage is set for a challenging 2008 session. When you add the drama of an election year to the equation, anything can happen.

Governor Announces New Discount Drug Card Program -- Under the state's new Discount Drug Card program, 3,000 pharmacies in Florida will provide pharmaceuticals at a

discounted price for more than 3.8 million uninsured seniors without prescription drug coverage and for people under the age of 60 who are low-income, but do not qualify for Medicaid and lack drug coverage.

While savings will vary by drug, savings on the most commonly prescribed medicines will range from five to 42 percent, Governor Christ said. Both brand-name and generic drugs are in the program.

Floridians who plan to use the new drug card need to check to see if their pharmacy is participating. A check of the program's Web site shows most of the state's big retail pharmacy and grocery chains are participating, including CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, Kmart, Target, Publix, Sweetbay, Winn-Dixie and Albertsons. The Web site also lists what drugs are covered.

The drug card plan requirements include:

- Eligibility requirements. Under the plan, individuals qualify if they are 60 or older and have no prescription drug coverage, or if they are in the Medicare drug coverage gap. People under 60 may qualify if their annual income is less than 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level and they lack prescription drug coverage.
- Qualifying income levels for people under 60 are: up to \$30,636 a year for an individual; \$41,076 a year for a family of two; and \$61,956 for a family of four.

The new card plan will be administered by Envision Pharmaceutical Services, a pharmacy benefits manager based in Ohio. Envision manages a similar program for the state of Ohio. Program members will pay a one-time upfront charge of \$1.50 for the cost of the plastic card which they will receive when enrolled into the program.

Digital Converter Coupon Program Begins on January 1, 2008 - Over 22 million \$40 coupons are now available to help television owners buy special converter boxes for older TVs that might not work after the switch from analog to digital broadcasting (DTV). The converter boxes are expected to cost between \$50 and \$70 and will be available at most electronic retail stores. Consumers can apply for their coupons through a Web site, via a toll-free number, or by mail. Specifics are listed below:

- Households will be able to apply for a maximum of two (2) coupons, each worth \$40. Coupons will be mailed to eligible households and will expire after 90 days of issuance.
- Coupons will be available on a first-come-first-serve basis to all U.S. households until \$890 million has been expended.
- If these initial funds are exhausted, an additional \$450 million will be made available to households that receive only over-the-air television service.
- Consumers may call toll free 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009) in English and Spanish for updates.
- The hearing impaired may call the TTY number 1-877-530-2634 for information in English, and for information in Spanish, consumers can call TTY number 1-866-495-1161 for updates.
- Coupon Program details, Frequently Asked Questions and program brochure are online: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon/consumer.html>

Under legislation passed by Congress - the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 - over-the-air broadcast television stations are required to turn off their analog channels on February 17, 2009, and broadcast exclusively in the digital format.

New Law Requires Better Energy Efficiency -- Congress sent an energy bill to the White House that will increase the federal auto mileage requirement and require an increase in the use of ethanol as a substitute for gasoline. The House passed the bill 314-100, after the Senate approved it last week 86-8. Bush signed the measure Wednesday morning at the Energy Department.

The new law requires the industry to achieve an average of 35 miles per gallon for all vehicles, including SUVs and small trucks, by 2020, about a 10 mpg increase from what these vehicles get today. While all vehicles from small sedans to large SUVs must make some improvement in fuel economy, the required improvements may vary among vehicle classes as long as the overall industry average is 35 mpg.

The bill also calls for:

- A six-fold increase in ethanol use to 36 billion gallons a year by 2022. Of that, 21 billion gallons will have to be from feedstock other than corn such as prairie grasses or wood chips.
- Improved energy efficiency of appliances such as refrigerators, freezers and dishwashers, and a 70 percent increase in the efficiency of light bulbs.
- Energy efficiency improvements in federal building and new efficiency standards for construction of new commercial buildings with the idea that they produce as much electricity as they use.

Housing News

REAC Posts Announcement -- REAC has just posted the following announcement on the physical inspection pages. Beginning January 1, 2008, all inspections must be conducted according to the standards and practices outlined in this document, the [REAC Compilation Bulletin, Revision 1](#) or from the HUD Web site.

This is an updated compilation of numerous revisions/clarifications to the existing inspection definitions and protocols that have been made over time - sometimes with conflicting information. This new bulletin supersedes all prior guidance and offers current "authoritative" statements about a number of issues ranging from definitions to protocols/practices with scheduling and on-site behavior.

Other Housing News:

- HUDClips Web Page Retired - New Page More Cumbersome
- HUD Energy Training Webcasts Now Available Online
- Available Transportation Programs
- LEP Web Site Provides Resources and Guidance
- Two Changes Noted in Contract Renewal Process
- Question of the Week: 2008 OCAFs?

[FAHSA Housing Alert Page](#)

Nursing Home News

Congress Passes Medicare Bill to Extend Therapy Caps and Avert Cutbacks in Nursing

Home and Home Health Funding -

Before adjourning for winter recess, Congress passed a spending bill that benefits Medicare and Medicaid-certified long-term care facilities. The highlights are included in the latest Nursing Home Alert, NH 08-01.

Other Nursing Home Issues:

- Special Open Door Forum on Minimum Data Set, Version 3.0 (MDS 3.0) Scheduled;
- MedWatch Alerts and Warnings;
- Study Finds Admissions Agreements in Missouri Nursing Homes Flawed; and
- 'Immediate Jeopardy' Citations Rise 22 percent, Report Says.

[FAHSA Nursing Home Alert Page](#)

Preferred Business Associates News



FAHSA's Preferred Business Associates Program (PBAs) -- A list of PBAs can be found by on the FAHSA Web site www.fahsa.org and selecting Preferred Business Associates from the left side menu bar or clicking on the FAHSA Preferred Business Associates Page hyperlink. FAHSA members can also use the on-line directory to search for PBAs by specialty.

[FAHSA Preferred Business Associates Page](#)

Job-Mart

FAHSA is pleased to provide an opportunity for you to advertise your "position wanted" or "position available" through the *FAHSA Link* newsletter and on our Web Page.

FAHSA members may use the Job Mart services at no charge. A nominal fee of \$25 will be charged to nonmembers.

Your Job Mart advertisement will be displayed on our Web site for approximately three months. The *FAHSA Link* is published weekly and distributed to our membership which is comprised of nursing homes, CCRCs, HUD housing, assisted living facilities, independent living facilities and companies/firms.

To reserve advertisement space in our Job Mart program, please complete the [application](#) and fax it to FAHSA at (850) 671-3790 or E-mail Erin Steele at esteele@fahsa.org

FAHSA's Group Purchasing Organizations

FAHSA is pleased to tell you about the FAHSA Group Purchasing Organization (GPO). The GPO program further enhances the value you receive from your membership and is required for us to be in compliance with Medicare Safe Harbor requirements. The FAHSA GPO program, in conjunction with the AAHSA, Care Purchasing (CPSI), and FMS Purchasing and Services (FMS) GPOs offer you the opportunity to save daily purchases from over 200 vendor partners. To view these vendor partners please click on the [Preferred Business Associated Guide](#) and go to pages 22-25.

FAHSA members participating in these programs are saving from seven to 50% off list prices. In addition to these savings, your participation allows FAHSA to receive non-dues revenue

based on your purchases. This revenue assists FAHSA to provide the educational programs and advocacy you expect while keeping membership dues' to a minimum.

There is no obligation or commitment on your part to participate in the FAHSA GPO programs. This is simply a value added member benefit. Our program is also not exclusive; you can belong to one or all three GPOs. We simply ask that you look at all of the FAHSA programs and decide the best savings for you.

We have three (3) Enrollment Agreements and ask that you complete one or all and fax the completed enrollment to the GPO at the number listed on the form. **Click below to obtain the enrollment form.**

1. [AAHSA Enrollment Form](#)
2. [Care Purchasing Enrollment Form](#)
3. [FMS Purchasing & Services Enrollment Form](#)

If you are already enrolled in one of the GPOs, you are still required to complete a new enrollment form in order to have the FAHSA GPO covered under the Medicare Safe Harbor Laws.

If you have any questions, please call Julie Copeland, Vendor Relations Coordinator or Janegale Boyd, President/CEO (850) 671-3700. Thank you for your continued support of FAHSA.

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