

## Notes from the Director

Hello Everyone,

I hope that this newsletter finds everyone having a lovely holiday season. As you know, our new LTC survey process began on November 28, 2017; however, this agency began conducting our first surveys under the new process during the week of December 4, 2017. We have several surveys using the new process under our belts now, and feel it is going as well as could be expected with a brand new process using new computer equipment and software. These first few surveys took a bit longer, generally speaking, than under the old process, but we are hoping this is due to lack of experience conducting this process using this equipment, and think that we will become faster at the process with additional practice and experience.

Numbers of deficiencies cited averaged 4-6 and ranged from no deficiencies (Congratulations!) to 10 deficiencies, so really nothing terribly unusual regarding numbers of tags cited. Surveyors did have a bit of trouble with sharing data from tablet to tablet due to a corrupted flash drive and some other issues, but we were able to resolve them on-site with calls to our excellent central office ASPEN (software program used for federal SOD's) staff and training staff.

The managers in each region, who also went on survey to help with training and to learn the process better for themselves, reported very positive impressions of the new process overall. Surveyors, who had been worried about using the software and about the process in general, reported that they were pleasantly surprised. They were very positive about using the new process and did not find it as difficult as it seemed to be when they were first exposed to it. Of course, this does not mean that there will not be any further issues or quirky situations that will need to be resolved, but I am highly pleased with the positive feedback received from even the most skeptical staff.

I received comments from a couple of provider staff that made it through these first surveys, and the comments from the provider side were also positive regarding the new LTC survey process. I would be very happy to hear from any provider staff who have undergone the new process and might wish to provide input or insight into their perceptions of the process. I will be going to a CMS

state survey agency directors' meeting during the week of January 22, 2018, and would like to share surveyor and provider comments with CMS and the other state agencies in Region IV. Don't worry, I will not provide the name or facility of the commenters!

Another topic that might be of interest to you is the process our state will use to survey the Emergency Preparedness requirements. States can choose to have this portion of the survey conducted by either the health surveyors, the LSC surveyors, or a combination of both. Kentucky has chosen, at this point, to have the LSC surveyors look at the Emergency Preparedness requirements for those facility types that receive a LSC survey, and the health surveyors will look at them for those provider types that do not require a LSC survey. We will see how this works, and this could be changed in the future depending on time concerns and availability of survey staff.

According to some other states across the country, having LSC surveyors conduct the emergency preparedness portion of the survey has added up to 4 hours to the LSC survey. However, in the surveys we have conducted thus far, we have not needed to add that much time. This is all still quite new, so we will need to see how it plays out over time and adjust, if needed.

On the topic of Emergency Preparedness, Betty Shiels and the University of Louisville will be providing several training sessions for providers over the next 3 years through a CMP fund grant. Surveyors will also be attending some of these training sessions. For those of you who have not heard Betty speak before, she is an animated and dynamic speaker who has a vast knowledge of Emergency Preparedness needs and issues in Kentucky. I am really looking forward to the first sessions, which will be held in February and March of 2018. Information regarding dates, times, locations, and registration will be available in our LTC newsletter.

Well, I think that is about it for this month. I look forward to seeing everyone in the new year, hopefully all rested and refreshed! From all of us at the Office of Inspector General, we wish you and yours a happy, healthy, and blessed New Year!

Sandra Houchen, Director