



Fall 2025 Newsletter

Best Practices, Education, Strategies & Training (BEST)

About Us

The American College of Health Care Administrators values and seeks to advance and promote diverse and inclusive participation within the organization regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, national origin, or disability. Guided by these values, the organization strongly encourages and embraces participation of diverse individuals as it leads health care administrators in the Long-Term Care industry to achieve excellence through education, information, and dialogue.

The BEST Committee Mission has two primary goals focused on Member Engagement and Program Development. The American College of Health Care Administrators affirms its dedication to supporting the core values, principles, and goals of diversity and inclusion in its leadership and operations.

New Member Spotlight: Dr. Demetrius Kirk



Dr. Demetrius Kirk's path to leadership began at the bedside—as a CNA, then LPN, RN, BSN, and Nursing Home Administrator. His front-line experience shaped a passion for stronger systems and better leadership in post-acute care. That drive led him to advanced degrees, including his DNP, where his project *"Towards Zero Falls"* cut resident falls by 86.6% in just seven weeks.

Now recognized nationally for his expertise in risk management and compliance, Dr. Kirk has guided organizations through crises, mergers, and turnarounds. He also founded **SMK Medical** and **Survey Guard**, bringing innovation and accountability to the sector.

Becoming a Fellow of ACHCA (FACHCA) is both a milestone and a mission for Dr. Kirk. His message to future leaders: *"You cannot afford to think inside the box. The challenges facing our sector demand creativity, courage, and innovation."*



New Member Spotlight: Travis James Le Duc



With more than 30 years of cross-sector leadership, Travis James Le Duc has built a career defined by vision, collaboration, and service. His journey spans military leadership, finance, early childhood development, and healthcare—each chapter strengthening his ability to guide organizations through complex challenges with empathy and strategic insight.

Today, Travis serves as Director of Operations, Communications & Compliance Officer for the Tohono O’odham Nursing Care Authority (TONCA) and Assistant Administrator of the Archie Hendrick Sr. Skilled Nursing Facility. In these roles, he has led transformational change, advanced compliance and quality initiatives, and successfully negotiated Medicaid enhancements with Tribal, State, and Federal partners.

A LeadingAge Larry Minnix Leadership Academy Fellow and proud ACHCA member, Travis continues to mentor emerging leaders and serve his community through board and coalition work. His approach to leadership, rooted in emotional intelligence and inclusivity—reminds us that progress is achieved when people and purpose come first.

Administrator in Training (AIT) Highlight: Kishva Daniels



Kishva Daniels brings a unique blend of military discipline, technical expertise, and a passion for advocacy to his journey in healthcare leadership. She served nearly 13 years in the United States Air Force as a Chief Information Manager and Work Group Manager before transitioning into the IT field, where she earned Cisco and A+ certifications and launched her own company, Fantastic Digital Solutions.

In 2019, Kishva redirected her focus toward healthcare after witnessing firsthand the need for stronger leadership and advocacy for vulnerable individuals. Since then, she has earned her Master of Science in Health Care Administration from Grand Canyon University and is pursuing her Doctorate in Healthcare Administration with



a concentration in Organizational Leadership, expected in April 2026. Currently completing her Administrator-in-Training experience, Kishva's goal is to be a licensure as a healthcare administrator.

For Daniels, joining ACHCA has been an important milestone, offering mentorship, professional growth, and a supportive network of peers. "ACHCA has been more than professional recognition—it's a community that fosters mentorship and prepares the next generation of leaders," she shared.

AIT Highlight: Haley Hilkey



Haley Hilkey's journey into healthcare leadership began nearly a decade ago at the bedside as a physical therapist assistant in skilled nursing. There, she saw firsthand how staffing, reimbursement, and organizational culture shaped residents' outcomes long before they began rehab. That experience sparked her drive to move beyond treating symptoms and instead shape the systems that determine care quality.

Now a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator, Haley blends her clinical background with administrative training and her Cherokee identity. Guided by the Cherokee principle of Gadugi—working together for the good of all—she views leadership as stewardship. Her vision is bold: to transform post-acute care in the U.S., advocate for payment reform, and build systems of care that honor both evidence-based practice and indigenous traditions.

Looking ahead, Haley plans to pursue a Certified Professional of Healthcare Quality credential and a doctorate in healthcare administration. Her ultimate goal is to develop a "Cherokee Blueprint"—a model of care rooted in cultural values, wellness, and dignity—that can inspire communities nationwide. For Haley, leadership is not just about managing systems, but reshaping them so every elder, caregiver, and family member feels seen, valued, and supported.



BEST STORYTELLING:

UNITE Natives 2024 Part 1 – Resilient: Preserving Our Culture Through Our Elders

Summary:

The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded a webinar for the UNITE Natives to discuss their holistic approaches to providing care while Quality Reporting Periods (QRP) focus has been heightened. Specifically, measurements related to discharge from post-acute care and 30-day post-discharge readmissions. Moreso, recognizing the community based best practices to health and resources has optimized the quality of services provided within the Native Country.



The evolution of post-acute care has challenged providers to reach beyond their individual care settings to better support relationships across the health care spectrum. This shift is evidenced in current CMS Quality Reporting Program (QRP) measures related to supporting effective care transitions and the recently allowed flexibility to provide care via telehealth and remote therapeutic & physiological monitoring.

Prevalent health issues: Discussion on specific health problems common in the tribe that the nursing home is equipped to address. **Specialized care:** Availability of specific programs to



manage chronic diseases, mental health issues, rehabilitation services. Collaboration potential: Partnerships with other health institutions for specialized services, research, training.

Section GG: Residents may be at risk of further functional decline which can challenge discharge planning. The amount of assistance needed, and the risk of decline vary from resident to resident. A wide range of physical, neurological, and psychological conditions and cognitive factors can adversely affect physical function. Dependence on others can lead to feelings of helplessness, isolation, diminished self-worth, and loss of control over one's destiny. As inactivity increases, complications such as pressure ulcers, falls, contractures, depression, and muscle wasting may occur.

Section GG Documentation Scenarios:

Independent

- Setup or clean-up assistance
- Help before or after activity only
- Supervision or touching assistance
- Verbal cues
- Touching/steadying/contact guard
- Supervision
- Non-Weight Bearing

Preparation for Events can be incorporated into Residents Care Plans:
Community Fishing Trip





ACHCA

American College of
Health Care Administrators

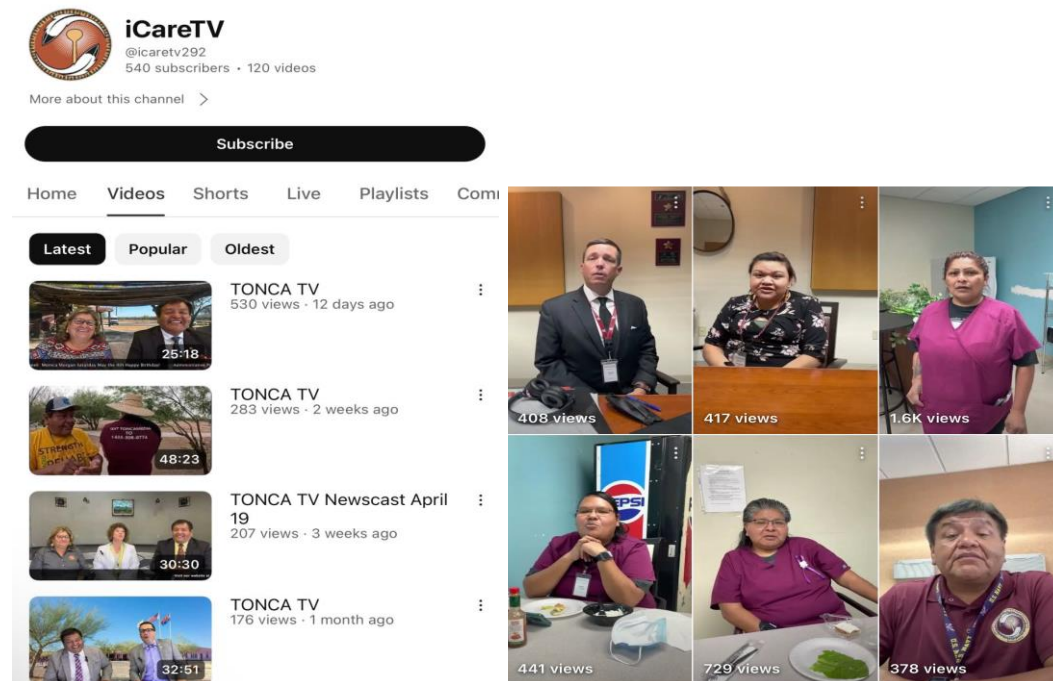


Community Connection Role of elders are valued members of the community, repositories of wisdom, cultural leaders, educators of the younger generations. It is important to promote community involvement that promotes socialization, emotional support, and reduces feelings of isolation. News sources are imperative to bridge the gap between residents and important topics within the community. Other celebratory events also strengthen the intergenerational connections with storytelling, music, food, and dance.





Access to Tribal News: *TO Connections*



Nursing home's role: Facilitates community engagement through events, volunteering opportunities, mentorship programs, and tailored Health Care Programs

Prevalent health issues: Discuss specific health problems common in the tribe that the nursing home is equipped to address.

Specialized care: Availability of specific programs to manage chronic diseases, mental health issues, rehabilitation services.

Collaboration potential: Partnerships with other health institutions for specialized services, research, training.



Situational Leadership Tips Part 1:

As we transition into 2026, healthcare leaders continue to face challenges within the workforce and financial stability. Continuing to cultivate members of the team to strive for excellence and tapping

into their strengths will serve as a driving force towards success.

The S4 Model (Situational Leadership Theory) can be used as a tool to elevate the day-to-day operations.

Below: see Part 1 of the gems for your toolbox.

S4-Delegating.

Not allowing yourself to become burnout or overwhelmed with tasks and projects. Recognizing who may be best served within your team and allowing them to execute. This method works best for teams who are confident, eager, and of course have the required skills. Provide encouragement and support to that team member to ensure appropriate goals are met.

S3-Participating

In this case, autonomy is key. No one wants a micromanager. That leads to fear, not feeling appreciated, and lack of confidence. Communication should be collaborative, engaging, and ongoing. Therefore, the team will be motivated, inspired, and tap into creative skills that may have been overlooked.

Stay tuned for Part 2.

Quote of the Season:

“They may forget your name, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”
-Maya Angelou

BEST Committee Leads

- **Dr. Angela Perry, FACHCA (CT)** – angelacodew@gmail.com (Chair /Board Liaison)
- **Dr. Kendall Brune, FACHCA (MO)** – Kendall@anthem-care.com (Co-Chair)

Committee Members



- **Dr. Xiaoli Li - AIT (IL)** – xiaoli.li@siu.edu
 - **Dr. Demetrius Kirk, FACHCA (HI)** – SMK Medical – smkmedicalllc@gmail.com
 - **Karen Northover LNHA (FL)** – northunder@gmail.com
-

ACHCA members — please feel free to contact any of the committee members for questions on how to GET INVOLVED, be recognized, and share YOUR BEST practices!