

FROM THE CHAIR

Wow, do I have a lot on my plate or what? I just returned from a company annual meeting all jazzed up about the projected changes forthcoming with health care reform. The federal surveyors finally exited the building after a surprise visit following the state survey. My boss just called asking why our census numbers had dropped this month. I opened my mail to an EEO complaint from one of my employees and a resident is sitting outside my office upset with her recent bill. This isn't even a Monday but a Friday and just one hour into my work day. Gosh, I love my job and it's only 3 days until Monday! I bet this story is not uncommon with many of you working in the senior health and housing ministry and still occurs, hopefully on a less frequent basis, to those of us who have served in this capacity for many years. And yet, we persist, unfettered and determined to continue to serve and care for our residents and staff members. I also know that we often question ourselves on these rare occasions, why? Why do I keep trying to do my best when so many obstacles are thrown in my way? I am quite sure the answers to this question would be pretty similar to seasoned leaders. We love what we do. We love the ability on a daily basis to impact lives in a positive way. The continuing influx and changes in the regulations and payment systems are nothing more than challenges to which we will find solutions. Resident and staff complaints are flags for improvement. Census fluctuations are opportunities for team play. And Fridays signal a short hiatus until Monday begins-I can't wait!! I had a mentor several years ago who fashioned this statement that will stick with me for life-"Only three days until Monday". He was serious and excited about that fact and very positively motivated, because he loved his vocation and the ministry he served. He had some not so quite perky days but always remembered that the very next moment could be that opportunity to be a positive difference in someone's life. He did not have the time or energy to worry incessantly about surveyors or regulations because it distracted him from seeing opportunities to serve his staff and residents. He would always tell me to keep my eyes on the light of the vision and to put on blinders to those who cry 'we can't do this' or 'won't do this' or 'here we go again'. The value of mentoring is priceless with often minimal costs of time or resources. The fact that we all are potential mentors is true whether we realize it or not. In our roles as leaders, we are looked to for direction and inspiration. Our staff and residents see us on a daily basis and observe our every behaviors and words. So how do we look? We have numerous new leaders and administrators-in training that need mentors not just facilities to "do their time in". So how do we look? Are these new leaders given the hopes and aspirations of the 3 days until Monday or the TGIF approach? The College is in a unique position to focus on this art of mentorship because we promise to grow and fashion the best and most qualified leaders in senior health and housing. We advocate leaders of the highest integrity and ethical behavior. But all too often we fail our newest colleagues and leaders because they lack the mentorship that bridges the gap between college, internship and that first job. Too often they are thrown to the wolves with little or no support in some rural facility in some unknown part of the state. The College can be that bridge and is that bridge. Membership promises access to a network of peers who are there at a moments notice through our Peer-2-Peer network and often at the sound of a phone ring, if we know about ACHCA or are familiar with its benefits. That is part of mentoring and I am thankful our Academy for Long Term

Leadership has decided to make this their focus for the upcoming year. I hope you will take part in their initiative in whatever way you see fit, whether it is part of working committees, making a donation to the Academy or taking on a mentorship role. Our educational conferences are an excellent way to be present to our newer members in a mentorship role as we all share stories of support or network problem solving. Sometimes it is just a simple ask from you to have a newer member join your dinner plans or social outings. I hope to see many of you, my mentors, at our upcoming Winter Marketplace Meeting in Las Vegas and our 49th Annual Convocations in New Orleans next year. And remember, it's only 3 days until Monday. Thanks for what you do everyday!!!