

PACE is Responding to the Coming Healthcare Storm

On October 29, 1991 a seemingly harmless area of low pressure developed off the Atlantic coast of Canada and was forced southward by a ridge to its north. Moving over warmer waters, the system transitioned into a subtropical cyclone before becoming a tropical storm. It then executed a loop off the Mid-Atlantic States and began moving toward the northeast. By November 1st, the system evolved into a full-fledged hurricane, with peak sustained winds of 75 miles per hour. A buoy off the coast of Nova Scotia reported a wave height of 100.7 feet, the highest ever recorded in the province's offshore waters. It was in the middle of this viscous storm that the fishing vessel Andrea Gail sank, killing her crew of six. The tropical system eventually weakened, striking Nova Scotia as a tropical storm before dissipating. Damage from the storm totaled over \$200 million and the total death toll was thirteen.

Interestingly, the National Hurricane Center left this hurricane unnamed. However, during a conversation between a Boston National Weather Service forecaster and an author writing about the storm's devastation, they gave it a name, simply calling it "*The Perfect Storm*," which turned into a book and, subsequently, a block buster movie.

A "perfect storm" results when a rare combination of meteorological phenomena occurs. Since then, this term has been used to describe many catastrophic events, weather related and non-weather related. Today, in the healthcare industry, there are markers indicating the development of the "perfect storm" among our aging population. Our country is aging at a time when there is already a shortage of geriatricians. Add to these facts that people are living longer and you have a trifecta that is a recipe for the "perfect storm" in healthcare.

Interestingly, Michigan is aging faster than the rest of the country. In 2010, residents in Michigan over age 65 represented just under 14 percent of Michigan's population. That's expected to reach more than 23 percent by 2040 and the share of residents older than 85 is projected

to more than double between 2015 and 2045. Additionally, according to the Alzheimer's Association, the number of Alzheimer's patients in Michigan older than 65 is expected to climb from 180,000 in 2018 to 220,000 by 2025. That represents an increase of nearly 16 percent or 40,000 people in seven years.

What is the answer to this perfect storm developing in our state and across the country? When speaking to the audience at an event in Washington, DC, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid, Andy Slavitt, then acting administrator of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), spoke about the benefits of PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) saying, "When I visit them (PACE organizations), I feel like I'm glimpsing very much into our future."

PACE organizations around the country are actively and effectively responding to this inevitable storm in healthcare among the most vulnerable people in our society, the medically complex elderly. Currently, there are 130 PACE programs operating 260 PACE centers in 31 states, serving more than 50,000 participants. Locally, Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. is filling this need in Calhoun, Kalamazoo, eastern Van Buren, southeastern Allegan, and southern Barry counties, with centers located in Battle Creek, Kalamazoo and Portage. These three centers collectively now serve the healthcare needs of over 500 medically complex older adults in the coverage area.

Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. is blazing the trail in our region for a new model of delivering healthcare to older adults by creating a collaborative medical care setting where participants can receive most of the care they need under one roof. Each center is equipped with a full medical clinic, day center for socialization, meal service, a physical therapy facility, and access to a team of healthcare professionals including medical doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, recreational therapists, dietitians, social workers, chaplains, and personal care assistants. This entire

interdisciplinary team works with each participant and their caregiver(s) to develop a unique and specific plan of care. This same team meets daily to discuss and respond to any necessary changes for participants. There are staff on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays, to respond to any emergency situations. Additionally, transportation is provided to and from the center at no additional cost. Most participants receive all these services at no out-of-pocket expense to them.

Recognizing the "perfect storm" that is brewing, in 2017 the National PACE Association (NPA) has launched the PACE 2.0 initiative with support from the John A. Hartford Foundation and the West Health Policy Center. The project is a two-year, grant-funded initiative to explore ways to achieve exponential growth in PACE, from the approximately 40,000 PACE participants served in 2017 to 200,000 participants. This growth plan will look at opportunities to spread the PACE model of care to new communities and populations, as well as scale the model to serve more people at each PACE organization.

As part of this initiative, Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. was recently recognized by NPA as a "PACE Setter" in the "Emerging Lights" category. Centers achieving this designation have attained an estimated average net enrollment of 10 or more new participants in at least one month of the first two quarters of 2019. By comparison, the average PACE organization grows at the rate of three participants a month. Only 28 out of 129 PACE organizations across the country achieved this level of increase in participants. This growth means Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. is helping more seniors remain independent in their own home with a higher quality of life and care, while also helping them experience fewer hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and nursing home stays!

To learn more about the many services provided by Senior Care Partners P.A.C.E. you may call (269) 441-9319 or visit www.seniorcarepartnersmi.org.