



We make **home** an alternative

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Editor's Note

Our local newspaper recently published a fascinating article about the use of unlicensed home health aides by seniors within our community. While we often don't like to look at the negative aspects of our industry, our lead article this month rings true on the potential pitfalls that vulnerable adults frequently face when choosing to hire someone "off the street."

We hope your are enjoying your summer.

George Cann
Editor

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Hiring unlicensed home aides can be risky for seniors

**By Jon Burstein, South Florida Sun-Sentinel, April 7, 2008.
Reprinted with permission.**

The 93-year-old woman wanted to continue living in her Hallandale Beach home, so she hired a caregiver based on a friend's recommendation.

That decision nearly cost Sylvia Maizuss \$447,000 with the in-home aide gaining power of attorney over her and draining her bank accounts, state authorities said this week.



The state Department of Children & Families (DCF) got back nearly \$415,000 for Maizuss, the largest monetary recovery in the agency's history. Officials say the case highlights a much larger worry in the state: senior citizens who hire in-home care without going through licensed agencies.

Senior citizens or their families who find in-home care through classified ads, fliers or by word of mouth could be paying less for the services, but they are taking a risk with whom they are letting into their homes, according to DCF officials. Home health aides watch over senior citizens, helping them with daily routines, errands and maintaining their homes.

"We tell our [families] do not go to 'the street' to get people to come into your home and take care of a loved one and be exposed to your own treasures," said Mary Barnes, chief executive officer of Alzheimer's Community Care based in West Palm Beach. "You should deal with the official system."

Florida law requires that agencies employing home health aides be licensed and that the aides undergo criminal background checks and receive at least 40 hours of training or pass a competency evaluation.

But there are no requirements when an individual advertises as a home health aide.

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Spotlight on Caregivers



ALTERNATIVE
HOME HEALTH CARE

Employees of the Month



**Alfreda B.
Fort Lauderdale**

Alfreda has been working with us since March 2005. She is dedicated and always willing to go the extra mile. Her clients truly adore her. Congratulations Alfreda and keep up the good work!



**Sonia H.
Miami**

Sonia has been taking care of Mr. & Mrs. C. since December 2007. The clients respect and trust Sonia, and she treats them like family while providing excellent care in a challenging setting. Congratulations Sonia!

CLOCKWORK for CASH

YOU could be the next \$100 winner!

Each employee who is 100% Clockwork compliant will have the opportunity to have their name entered into a drawing for \$100 cash. Please be sure to check the July issue of the newsletter to see if you are the **next \$100 winner!** Clockwork compliant winners are chosen bi-monthly.

Clockwork July \$100 Winners:



Fort Lauderdale: Marie P.
Marie obtained 100% compliance rate.



Miami: Remona M.
Remona achieved 100% compliance with clocking in and out and entering task codes.

Employee Anniversaries

10 Years

Geneva P. Michael S.

9 Years

Tina S.

7 Years

Shernette A.

6 Years

Alexis P.
Andrea H.
Aneita W.
Carol F.

Cecelia E.
Maria G.
Marie D.
Gaelle S.

5 Years

Calisha G.

4 Years

Joan A.

Ladean L.

3 Years

Denise B.
Dorothy F.
Esther W.
Evelyn Y.

Olive G.
Pauline H.
Sylvia D.
Wilma J.

2 Years

AnnMarie B.
Ann Marie G.
Carol R.
Edna B.
Elethia V.
Erlena R.
Frances S.
Gehane S.
Jolene M.
Lulletta L.
Marcia L.

Marie Carle B.
Marie D.
Marlene P.
Millicent J.
Monique D.
Nilsa G.
Olivia W.
Rita W.
Sandra M.
Sheila S.
Sophia R.

1 Year

Agatha L.
Betty B.
Debbie Y.
Fiona J.
Genevieve H.
Jaqueline D.
Ketline J.
Marcia R.
Marie S.
Marlene C.

Mitzie C.
Nadeen M.
Natassia M.
Patricia L.
Rosy S.
Ruby Y.
Valrie M.
Vierge P.
Yveline M.
Zipporah M.

Thank You

Unlicensed Home Aides

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“There’s definitely a loophole in the licensure law,” said Gene Tischer, executive director of the Associated Home Health Industries of Florida.

And while aides not hired through agencies may advertise themselves as cheaper alternatives, they could become more expensive in the long run, Barnes said. They could raise their rates once they think retirees have become dependent on them.

Lola Salzman, 71, lost her life after hiring a home caregiver from a classified ad.

Salzman was stabbed 43 times inside her Hallandale Beach apartment in July 2002 by Charlene Rosa, a woman who advertised as a “companion” and “driver” in a free weekly newspaper. Rosa worked for less than three days before attacking Salzman in a fit of rage over the retiree’s refusal to pay her. Salzman’s body wasn’t discovered until two weeks later.

Rosa, 39, is serving a life sentence after a Broward Circuit Court jury convicted her last year of first-degree murder.

DCF Senior Attorney Jean Costa said that in Maizuss’ case, the caregiver never would have been hired by a home health agency because of her criminal background. In 1996, she was sentenced in Miami-Dade County to four years’ probation on fraud and exploitation of elderly charges, Costa said.

The South Florida Sun-Sentinel is not naming the in-home aide because she has not been criminally

charged in Maizuss’ case. The Hallandale Beach Police Department has submitted the case to the Broward State Attorney’s Office, finding probable cause for her to be charged with exploitation of the elderly, according to police reports. The Broward State Attorney’s Office declined to comment on the case.

A DCF investigator discovered the theft after responding to a hotline tip that the home health aide had physically abused Maizuss. The caregiver had obtained power of attorney over Maizuss in October 2006, added her name to all of Maizuss’ bank accounts and removed Maizuss’ name, said DCF investigator Cheryl George, who handled the inquiry.

The aide had been using Maizuss’ money for everyday expenses as well as transferring money to the aide’s boyfriend, Costa said.

The state agency successfully froze the bank accounts, Costa said. The money was put back in Maizuss’ name in November with the caregiver relinquishing any claim to it.

Maizuss still has 24-hour in-home help, and the nonprofit South Florida Guardianship Program is acting as her guardian.

“You hardly ever see exploitation to this degree when you go through an agency,” said Robert Trinkler, an attorney for the program. “And if you do, at least you

have an agency standing behind you with a bond and insurance. You have protection. The chance of this occurring with an agency would be remote.”

Jon Burstein can be reached at jburstein@sun-sentinel.com or 954-356-4491.



THE OUTCOME OF THIS ARTICLE is very sad. However, Alternative Home Health Care is proud to offer our clients the protections, services, and care at the highest standard of quality. Only home health care agencies provide liability and bond protection along with stringent hiring practices.

In addition, Alternative offers accountability unmatched by any other home health care company in Fort Lauderdale or Miami. “Clockwork” is a telephone-based time tracking system plus much more. We invite you to learn more about choosing a home health care provider and “Clockwork” by visiting our website at: www.alternativehomehealth.com, or by calling us toll free at: 877-584-7772.





4481-2 North State Road 7
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33319
License #HHA299991246

190 Northeast 199th Street, Suite 108
North Miami Beach, FL 33179
License #HHA299992273

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NEWSLETTER



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