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- > Companions
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Company News

Proud to be Deficiency Free

Representatives from Florida’s Agency for Health Care Administration, (AHCA) recently surveyed our Fort Lauderdale office and passed our agency with no deficiencies. This marks 9 continuous years as a deficiency free agency. The purpose of AHCA is to assure accessible, quality health care for all Floridians. The survey is completed unannounced and a “deficiency free” evaluation is recognized throughout the state as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization’s commitment to meeting certain performance standards.

While surveyed some time ago, our Fort Myers location was also found to be operating within state guidelines. We are extremely proud of our managers who continue to demonstrate exceptional operational expertise.

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Medicaid Reform – We all should pay attention

By Carla Albano, ESQ. Administrator

You may view another article on Medicaid to be redundant or boring. However, I want to share with you a few stories which I have personally seen over the past few weeks. I have learned so much, and discovered that **we should all pay attention** when changes are proposed to this important element of our healthcare system.

Much press has been given to Florida’s review and potential overhaul of the Medicaid system. Presently in a formative process, there is a select committee of our legislators from both the Senate and House, examining Florida’s current system. This committee is chartered with making suggestions for change in the near future. This follows upon our Governor’s broad-brushed plan to change to Medicaid. What is encouraging about the “Select Committee” is that its membership includes some of the best and brightest legislators – many of whom are from South Florida.

Part of the review process involves public hearings in which any person can speak and voice their opinions. Broward County held such a hearing on February 14, 2005. Because over 120 people signed in to speak, I had the luxury of listening.

Many business leaders from the healthcare industry approached the podium. They all had carefully worded and insightful comments. Change is difficult when the livelihood of your company depends upon Medicaid funding. Change is doubly hard, if it is ambiguous or hard to understand. Unfortunately, this is precisely where all the businesses are today. So after listening to many businesses explain how the health of their company hinged upon “not being cut”, attention turned to several “Consumers” (as they are called), who came forward to speak.

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Editors Note:

The world of healthcare is always changing. While exciting, change can also cause anxiety among our clients, co-workers and friends. This month our Administrator shares her perceptions and commentary about Medicaid reform in Florida. Any opinions or conjecture are the opinion of the author, and are not intended to construe future state policy.

George Cann
Editor

Newsletter

Spotlight on the Caregivers

Fort Lauderdale

January 2005



Angella H. has worked with Alternative since January 2004. Angella has worked as a live-in home health aide with Mrs. K for approximately one year. Mrs. K relates that she couldn't make it without Angella. "She is not just my aide, she is my friend". Angella has proven to be not only proactive when she cares for her clients, but she is intuitive and able to predict Mrs. K's needs before she has to even ask. Angella is caring, professional and an asset to our team. Thank you and congratulations

February 2005



Paulette W. has worked with Alternative since March 2002. Paulette has worked with Mrs. A for two years. Paulette has become part of the family. She is always willing to assist and she always has a smile on her face. The family relates that Paulette is kind and considerate with their mother. "She pays attention to the fine details, always making sure that she is dressed nicely, her makeup and hair look perfect. Her jewelry even matches the outfit she is wearing." Paulette's clients have always had positive feedback regarding her care. We are glad that Paulette is part of our team. Thank you and congratulations.

Fort Myers

January 2005



Brenda P. Compassion, concern and going the extra mile, are words commonly used when speaking about Brenda. She demonstrates a unique quality of care whether dealing with her special needs clients or her more traditional cases. Brenda demonstrated her willingness to "go the extra mile" when one of her clients was recently hospitalized. Knowing that the client's beloved pet was "home alone," Brenda took it upon herself to stop at the client's home each day and care for the lovable feline. Brenda definitely brought a smile to her client's face when visiting her in the hospital upon assuring her that Fluffy (not her real name) was in good hands and just waiting for her quick recovery so they could be reunited. Congratulations and thank you Brenda!

February 2005



Angela H. Although Angela is new to the Alternative family, she has made an impressive impact with both clients and in-house staff alike. No assignment is too small or too large for Angela. From her first day of employment, she has accepted all assignments offered to her, even when some came as last minute emergency requests. It's evident with ever increasing calls into the office that Angela's clients love her. They compliment her on her professionalism, her quality of care, and the kind, loving way in which she works with them. Congratulations and thank you Angela!

Employee Anniversaries:

Fort Lauderdale

7 years Jacqueline A Juliet G	1 year Angella H Ange-Lore L Ann Marie T Balanda V Carleen C Cassie L Claudia B Delores H Dorothy B Ermine P Eulalee L Farah N Guerda L Hilrett H Jeanette St. T Karen H Leeander B Linda R Lisa T Marcia W Moneigue M Priscilla W Renette N Rhona M Tarmarsha K Thelma D Ursula R Valera O Valrie M
6 years Elaine H Ruth T	
5 years Mageta C Marie D Roenna T	
4 years Aloda J Bertrice C Ivelie S Lena B Luna C Maxine J Sonia L	
3 years Denise H Jennifer L Lorna E Maizetta P Marie P Myrel W Sharon E	
2 years Clenie J Cynthia H Dionne B Eulalee R Eunice G Genevieve M Jacqueline N Lee Myra F Marie Rene Tanya J	

Fort Myers

2 years Carol N. Jane B. Patricia L.	1 year Dionne H. Susan K.
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Medicaid Reform – We all should pay attention

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Each consumer's story seemed more compelling than the last. The story of one speaker has lingered with me now for a couple of weeks. He was a 47 year old single parent to a teenage son. He explained that after working hard for 30 years he came down with liver failure. "I didn't ask for this to happen" he said. "I never used drugs, or abused myself. I paid taxes, I owned a home, and I contributed to society--- It just happened."

The speaker went on to explain that he has lost just about everything as a result of his illness. Gone are his home, job and wife. What is left is his son. "I used to dream", he said. "My dreams are gone. All I want is to see is my son graduate high school..... I just want to live that long."

Medicaid pays for medication that this gentleman takes so that his body will not reject his new liver. He stated that the cost for the medication is in excess of \$5000 per month. Without the medication, he could die.

He closed by saying, "I'm here to tell you this can happen to anyone..... please let me live."

I'm purely a lay person when it comes to knowledge about transplants. The only thing I do know is that drugs are a key factor in their long-term success.

The issue of Medicaid reform is not limited to transplants. It affects a broad spectrum of people who are our own families, neighbors and friends. For example, another speaker described how Medicaid allowed her to adopt a special needs child. Without it, she said, people will not be able to adopt children in the future. I thought back to a dear friend, who just adopted her first child – how would Medicaid Reform affect her?

In the weeks following this hearing, newspapers everywhere are discussing Medicaid. On a subsequent trip to Tallahassee, I couldn't miss a 4 foot chart by the elevator. Medicaid reform is prominent in our legislature this year. It's no coincidence that this chart was posted in such a conspicuous place. The chart compared the number of people enrolled in Medicaid, versus the money spent.

By far, children are the majority of people enrolled in Medicaid. However, most of the money is allocated for Developmental Disabled and Elderly. How sad, I thought, after staring at it for several minutes. We're about to see a struggle among different groups of people, all seeking to carve up the pie to their own advantage.

If Medicaid reform plays out this way, it will be very painful to watch groups of deserving people polarize. I have no suggestions. I have no solutions. I have no opinions about the governor's plan. At this moment, I have hope and an observation. The America I have known over nearly the past half century has always taken care of the deserving. "Deserving" is not a term which can be quantified. It is impossible to determine some to be more deserving than others.

I believe America will continue to take care of the deserving, and that sacrifices from all of us are necessary. Remember **"it can happen to anyone."**

P.S.: If you wish to correspond with me, I can be reached at Carlaalbano@alternativehomehealth.com