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ALTERNATIVE
HOME HEALTH CARE

Florida's Medical Nursing Home Diversion Program

By Carla Albano, ESQ. Administrator

In the past, Medicaid for most elderly people used to mean a one way street. That street led to a nursing home, otherwise known as institutional care. As it was determined that the Medicaid system may not be meeting all of the needs of its recipients, a series of "exceptions" to the program were devised in hopes of promoting home and community based services (HCBS). It is believed that home and community based services are a more efficient use of program dollars, and provide better service to recipients. These "exceptions" were called waivers, and eleven now exist in Florida (not all apply to the elderly).

The Waiver for Nursing Home Diversion has been receiving a lot of press. This program originated in Orlando in 1998, and was later expanded to Palm Beach in 1999. In 2003, many other counties were added to the program, including Broward and Lee counties each which are served by our company.

The main goal of the Nursing Home Diversion program is to provide home and community-based services to functionally impaired elderly that are age 65 and over, enrolled in Medicare part A and B, and who are at risk for nursing home placement. Additional income and asset limitations also apply. Once enrolled in the "Diversion Program", the elderly person receives services in two areas, acute care and long-term care.

The array of long-term care services is comprehensive. Possible services include adult companion, adult day health, assisted living, case management, chore, consumable medial supplies, environmental accessibility and adaptation, escort, family training, financial assessment and risk reduction, home delivered meals, homemaker, nutritional assessment and risk reduction, personal care, personal emergency response systems, respite care, occupation, physical and speech therapies, home health and nursing facility services.

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Editors Note:

Change is one thing that is certain in life. As we look forward to a new year, our legislators and government leaders are closely examining two social programs which are near and dear to our hearts - Social Security and Medicaid. Like many states, Florida's Medicaid program is consuming more and more of the state budget. Over the years, Florida's legislators have examined cost control measures and tested creative programs in hopes of curtailing costs. One such program is called the Medicaid Nursing Home Diversion program. Our lead article this month describes this program. Many of us in the Long Term Care industry are carefully watching this new program.

George Cann
Editor

Newsletter

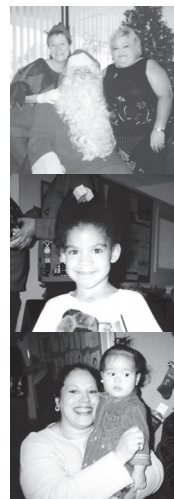


Caregivers Holiday Parties in Ft. Lauderdale and Ft. Myers

It was great to see our caregivers and their family along with our clients, enjoying themselves at the holiday parties held for our caregivers. Everyone had a really great time interacting with the office staff, enjoying the variety of food and entertainment, drawings and prizes. It was a great opportunity for the family members of our caregivers to meet and greet their loved one's co-workers.

Warm thanks and appreciation to all our caregivers for all that you do. We had a successful year for 2004, let's look forward to another in 2005.

All hats go off to the wonderful teamwork and effort that was put out by the staff to make this event one to remember. As the pictures show, fun was had by all.



Spotlight on the Caregivers

Fort Lauderdale

November 2004



Janet F. joined Alternative in July 2004, and has been an angel to all that she has been with. Janet is proactive in her care. She has assumed the role of advocate, but also as companion, caregiver and friend. Janet takes her role as Home Health Aide very seriously, but is able to provide her clients, and their families with love, kindness, patience and care. Her clients thrive when she is with them. She encourages her clients to strive for their best, and is always there with a smile and a positive attitude. Thank you and congratulations.

December 2004



Robertha K. joined Alternative in July, 2004 and always shows up with a smile and a positive attitude. Robertha's clients always have positive things to say about her. She is caring, kind and professional. She is always willing to help out in a pinch. Families relate that Robertha is able to keep their family members calm and happy, and she always goes the extra mile to make sure that their days are a little brighter. Thank you and congratulations.

Fort Myers

November 2004



Christina W. graduated from our first Home Health Aide class in September 2004. She has proven herself to be a proficient, dedicated home health aide. Clients adore her and know they can count on her; she is very reliable. Christina has shown gentle kindness and empathy for everyone she comes in contact with, from our office to her clients, to professionals in the community. She truly knows the meaning of respect. Congratulations and thank you.

December 2004



Priscilla E. also graduated from our first Home Health Aide class in Ft. Myers, in September 2004. In addition to caring for her four children, Priscilla cares for many of our clients, with unusual tenderness and compassion. Priscilla is very reliable, and always finds a way to say "yes" to both her clients and to the office. In the future Priscilla wants to further her education and become a LPN. We are very proud to have her as a part of our family. Congratulations and thank you

Employee Anniversaries:

Fort Lauderdale

8 years

Rachelle B.

7 years

Freida K.
Nell G.

6 years

Debbie L.
Lise D.
Sonia B.
Yvette J.

5 year

Hermine J.

4 years

Alma C.
Eve B.
Monica W.
Rose C.
Velma S.

3 years

Muriel B.

2 years

Joyce R.
Antoneth A.
Carissa B.
Claudia C.
Evelyn A.
Josiane L.

Lamercie M.
Merna H.
Natacha D.
Pamalyn W.

1 year

Alce F.
Carmelita W.
Carol R.
Charmaine B.
Donnarie B.
Gwendolyn O.
Inez D.
Joan B.
Merland M.
Navlette R.
Paulette J.
Sharon H.

Fort Myers

2 years

Mizun K.
Leeann M.
Constance U.

1 year

Cheryl A.
Sheronne O.

Florida's Medical Nursing Home Diversion Program

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Acute care services include community mental health services, dental, hearing and visual services, independent laboratory and x-ray, inpatient hospital and outpatient hospital/emergencies, physicians, prescribed drugs and optional transportation.

Managed care providers (usually private companies) have contracted with the state under this program, and the company provides the above services for a monthly fee set fee, often called "capitation". The company is also responsible for Medicare co-payments and deductibles. Services that consumers receive are authorized by a case manager, or other manager at the company.

In order to enroll in the Waiver for Nursing Home Diversion, consumers must first undergo a qualification process through the Department of Elder Affairs. Applicants are evaluated by the Comprehensive Assessment and Review for long-term care Services unit of Florida's Department of Elder Affairs (otherwise known as CARES). To qualify applicants must be determined to be at a nursing home level of care and they must meet one or more established clinical criteria.

The Lee County CARES Office is located at:

2295 Victoria Avenue, Room 309
Ft. Myers, FL. 33901
(239) 338-2620
(800) 226-6735

The Broward County CARES office is located at:

1400 W. Commercial Blvd., Suite 110
Ft. Lauderdale, FL. 33309
(954) 202-3200

The first step to applying to this program is to make contact with one of the offices above. Once a consumer is approved for the program, then s/he is able to select among local providers. A list of local providers should be available at the CARES office.

This article is intended to provide just a brief overview of this exciting program. For information specific to yourself, your loved one, or to one of your clients, please contact your local CARES office or refer to <http://www.fdhc.state.fl.us/Medicaid/sos.pdf>.