

The Bridge

PCAs: a bridge to community living

Volume 7—Summer 2013

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT QUALITY HOME CARE WORKFORCE COUNCIL

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Assistant Secretary Rosalie Edes

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE COUNCIL

“The Council plays an important role in strengthening the PCA program, and I look forward to working with members of the Council to continue this critical work.”

In January, Christine Griffin, Council Chair and Assistant Secretary for Disability Policies and Programs at the Executive Office of Health & Human Services, announced that she was leaving her position to become Executive Director of the Disability Law Center. In March, she was replaced by Rosalie Edes, who is both the new Assistant Secretary and the new Chair of the Council.

Edes has served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Disability Policies and Programs since 2009. During this time, she has worked closely with the leadership teams of all the disability agencies in the state on developing policies and programs and coordinating long-term-care, rehabilitation, and employment services. She has been a key player in the development of the community-based Medicaid waiver programs, and has advanced family-support initiatives, transition-planning for young adults, and the work of the statewide Autism Commission.

“The PCA program permits thousands of individuals to lead active lives in their own communities,” said Edes. “The Council plays an important role in strengthening the PCA program, and I look forward to working with members of the Council to continue this critical work.”



NEW TRAINING FUND FOR PCAs OFF TO A STRONG START

PCAs at a First Aid/CPR class held at the Lynn Community Health Center

The Training Fund for PCAs, established in 2011 by the Council and 1199SEIU, now has an official name: the Homecare Training Benefit. The 1199SEIU Training and Employment Fund (TUF), which administers the Benefit, has hired Linnea Rego as field coordinator for this project. Linnea, working with Fund Director Harneen Chernow, has implemented the priority-setting process described in the previous issue of *The Bridge*.

Classes started in autumn 2012. As of May 2013, more than 70 classes had been held in 12 locations in all corners of the Commonwealth. Approximately 500 PCAs have received training in subjects including CPR, Universal Precautions, ESOL, and basic and advanced computer skills. In 2013, TUF added a 4½-hour Fundamentals of Care class that had been developed as part of the PHCAST grant (see *The Bridge*, Vol. 6, p. 5). This course, which emphasizes principles of consumer control as well as skills needed by PCAs, has proven to be extremely popular. “I took the Fundamentals of Care class and really enjoyed it and learned a lot,” affirmed Nancy M.

Working with the Labor Management Committee (LMC), which oversees TUF’s work, the Council has started developing a course entitled “Communications and Boundaries,” which will help PCAs with the subjects of communication, conflict-resolution, and respecting privacy. The team constructing this curriculum used information from focus groups of both PCAs and consumers.

The LMC is working with TUF to develop two education benefits for PCAs who have worked for more than one year. A pilot program for tuition reimbursement for health care-related college-level courses has begun. The Fund will pay the tuition of any PCA successfully completing a course (grade C or better). In addition, 50 tuitions for the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training course are being funded under the same standards. “I am so excited about the tuition-voucher help,” said Maria G. “I’ve wanted to go to college for a long time and this will help me do it.” For further information on training courses or the tuition benefits, call 1-877-409-8283.



Joe Bellil

Thank You, Joe!

Joe Bellil Leaves Council

In June of this year, Joe Bellil, the Vice President of Public Affairs for Easter Seals of Massachusetts and one of the Workforce Council's original members, ended his service on the Council after two terms. In his seven years on the Council, Joe has been a leader in achieving the Council's goal of recruiting, training, and stabilizing the personal-care-attendant workforce. Joe served as Council Treasurer and Chair of the Labor/Management Committee, and was an active member of the Council Bargaining Committee.

"Everyone who served on or came in contact with the Workforce Council was impressed with Joe's quiet, yet forceful, leadership," said Jack Boesen, Director of the Council. Joe commented, "I have enjoyed working with my fellow Council members to strengthen the PCA program. Going forward, the Council will be even more important to both consumers and PCAs and I will continue to support the Council's work."



Pictured: the first graduating class of the Mediation Project

MEDIATION: A NEW TOOL FOR CONSUMERS AND PCAs

Brazilian Immigrant Center Reaches Out to Help

In her work as director of the Legal Clinic at the Brazilian Immigrant Center, Lydia Edwards has talked to a wide range of people with legal problems. Many of the most frustrating issues came from domestic workers: nannies, housekeepers, and others who worked, and sometimes lived, in their employers' homes. The complaints range from wage issues to working conditions, harassment, and a lack of respect for the work they performed.

Although Attorney Edwards knew that the court system could address some of these issues, she believed it would be more useful to have a system involving the workers and employers themselves as part of the solution. From this belief, the Domestic Worker/Employer Mediation Project emerged. "This mediation program is designed by workers and families for workers and families," said Edwards. This project helps both workers and employers to resolve conflicts with a positive outcome for both sides. To achieve this, there are teams of trained mediators assigned to each case who are workers and employers themselves.

Consumers and PCAs

The Center is now reaching out to the consumer/ employer population and the PCA workforce. The Center wants to assist in the resolution of existing disputes and recruit consumers and PCAs for training as mediators. Training in how to be a neutral mediator consistent with professional mediation standards is provided through a 30-hour program that the Community Dispute Settlement Center in Cambridge specially designed for these workers and their employers. One participant said of the course, "I didn't just learn about mediation, I learned incredible life skills that help me to this day."

"We are proud of having a program that is private, flexible, and diverse," said Edwards. "We believe this approach has a lot to offer the consumer and PCA communities." To date, the project has graduated two classes, totaling 33 mediators, including one consumer and two PCAs. For more information on training to be a mediator or using the project to resolve an existing dispute, you can call 617-783-8001, ext. 107, or e-mail mediation@braziliancenter.org.

New Member



Ann Ackil

PCA WORKFORCE COUNCIL WELCOMES NEW MEMBER

In April, Ann Ackil was appointed to the PCA Workforce Council by Attorney General Martha Coakley. Ann retired in 2012 from the Attorney General's office, where she'd worked for 16 years as an Assistant Attorney General in the Medicaid Fraud Division. In 2006, Ann was appointed to the Training Committee of the National Association of Medicaid Fraud Control Units, and participated in the development and facilitation of an intermediate-level training program for investigators and attorneys from across the country.

Before attending law school, Ann worked as a registered nurse in various clinical settings, such as intensive cardiac care, medical-surgical, and community health, including one year of service with the Army Nurse Corps in Vietnam. Ann graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a B.S. in nursing, and later received a M.S. from Boston University in community health nursing. She received her J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law, and is admitted to practice before the Massachusetts Courts, the U.S. District Court, and First Circuit Court of Appeals. Ann tells us, "I am pleased to have the opportunity to join the Council and look forward to contributing to its important work to improve the quality of the PCA workforce for the benefit of the consumers of these essential services."



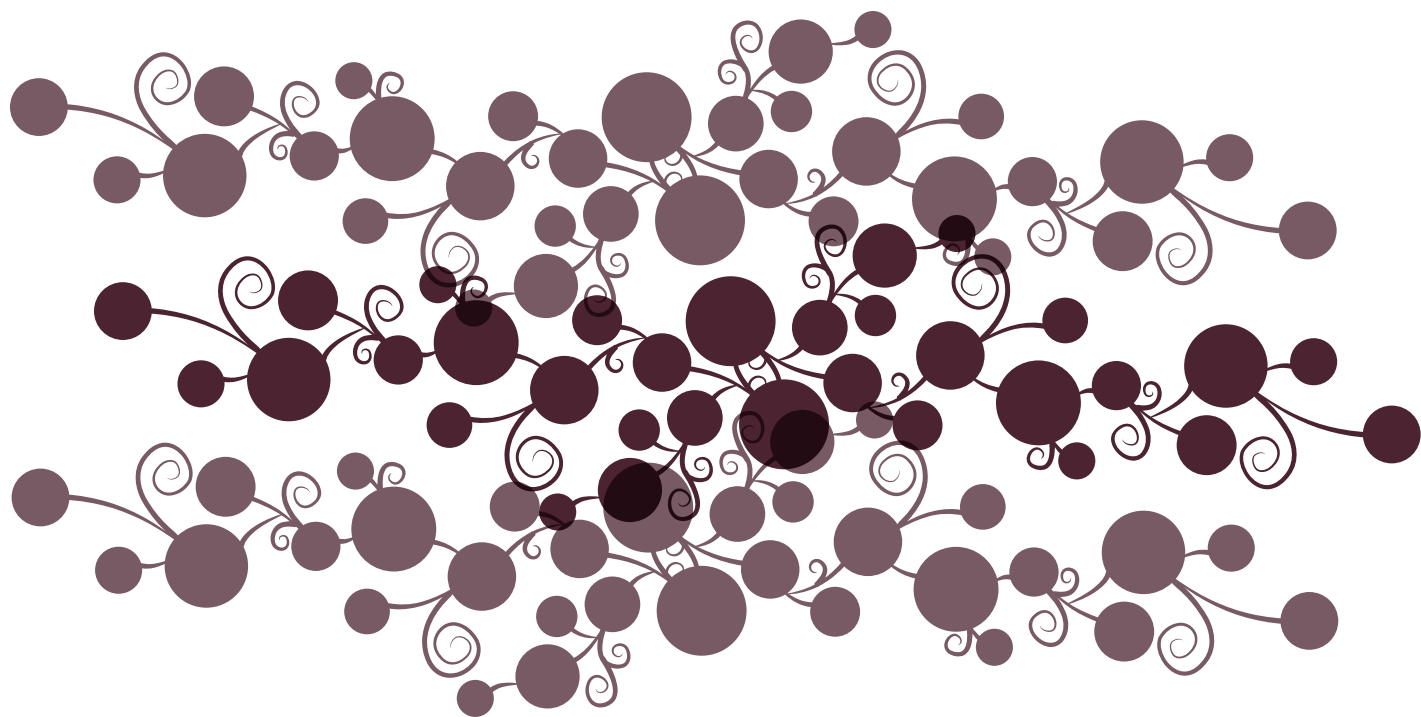


2012 PAUL KAHN AWARDS...TAKE TWO

Rebecca Gutman, 1199SEIU Vice President (r), presents Doris Forcier (l) with her award at the PAS Coalition meeting.

At the third annual Paul Kahn Awards ceremony, held at the State House in September 2012, something was decidedly different on the stage. Instead of the usual five award recipients, only four people stood with their plaques and congratulatory citations from the legislature. The reason? Doris Forcier, a PCA from Central Massachusetts, was frantically driving to Boston, an unfamiliar destination, and did not arrive until well after the ceremony had ended. Fortunately, this story does not end there.

The Statewide Personal Assistance Coalition, a group of advocates and agency staff concerned with protecting and improving the PCA program, had a meeting scheduled for the following week in Worcester. The Coalition invited Doris, who lives nearby, to appear at their meeting to receive her award and citation. Doris, who has worked for more than 14 years for the same consumer, was overwhelmed by the award and thanked the Coalition for making time for her and for recognizing the work of all PCAs.



2013 PAUL KAHN AWARDS FOR PCA SERVICE AND PCA EDUCATION DAY

The 2013 Paul Kahn Awards for PCA Service and PCA Education Day will be held on

**Wednesday, October 9, 2013,
at 1:00 p.m.**

**Location: the Grand Staircase
at the State House**

To get information on participating, call your local Personal Care Management Agency (PCM), Independent Living Center (ILC), or Aging Service Access Point (ASAP).





LOOKING to hire a PCA?

Remember

www.mass.gov/findpca.

Over 7,000 PCAs are listed,
along with their preferences
and qualifications.

Contribute to The Bridge

The Bridge is a newsletter for MassHealth members who use PCA services. We are very interested in your letters, articles, and thoughts about the PCA program and about improving the PCA workforce. Please send your ideas to pcacouncil@state.ma.us. We can't promise to print everything we receive, but all submissions will receive our serious attention. For consumers without e-mail, please call 617-210-5715 or forward your ideas to the address on the right.

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