



The Bridge

PCAs: a bridge to community living

The Newsletter of the Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council

Volume 12, Summer 2018

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The PCA Workforce Council launches a new PCA referral directory website July 1, 2018.

New and enhanced features include:

- Email alerts when a new worker match is found for you
- Access from your smartphone and mobile devices
- Backup-worker listings
- Translation in all major languages spoken across the state
- Enhanced job-posting board

Consumer registration begins June 1.

Be the first to get your job posting seen by PCA applicants across the state.

Click this link www.masspcadirectory.org or call (888) MASSPCA (627-7722) to complete your registration.

The new website is completely free and your registration is good for one year.

Interested in finding out more about the new Mass PCA Referral Directory?

Follow the PCA Workforce Council on Facebook for announcements, at www.facebook.com/MassPCA.

Email: pcacouncil@state.ma.us



COMING SOON

Recruiting and hiring a PCA just got easier....
Mass PCA Directory



Para una versión en español, por favor llame a su Agencia de atención personal o al (617) 348-5317.



PCA News and Updates

Update on PCA New Hire Orientation!

Beginning May 1, 2018, there'll be a new way to deliver the consumer-taught PCA New Hire Orientation! This version of the orientation is eye-catching and interactive, and delivers the material in an easy-to-understand format. You can use it with computers, tablets, and smartphones. The four modules are broken down into 10 parts that are delivered in the required three hours. The system remembers where you left off, so you won't have to repeat information you already covered. For more information, please visit www.mass.gov/pca.

Council Research Study

The Council is conducting a research study to learn what is working well and to identify areas for improvement in recruiting and hiring PCAs across the state. A research team at JSI (John Snow, Inc.) is working with the Council to conduct phone surveys and focus groups with randomly selected PCA consumers. The study will end in June 2018, and the results will be shared at Council meetings and via the Council's web page, newsletters, and biannual report to the legislature.

**LOOKING to
hire a PCA?**

REMEMBER

www.masspcadirectory.org

Over 7,400 PCAs are listed
along with their preferences
and qualifications.



Profiles of the 2017 Recipients of the Paul Kahn Award For PCA Service

The award is named in honor of Paul Kahn, a longtime PCA employer and independent living advocate who died in 2010. The 8th annual award ceremony was held on October 25, 2017, at the State House to recognize five PCAs from regions across Massachusetts and to honor the important work of PCAs in assisting individuals to remain at home.

Jesse Caplan, chair of the Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council, and Massachusetts Senator Patricia Jehlen opened the event with welcoming remarks to the awardees and their guests. With the presentation of awards, Jesse also read a personal profile of each awardee (starting on page 2) highlighting their individual accomplishments and dedication to the PCA profession.

This event was planned and sponsored through collaboration between the PCA Workforce Council, Rewarding Work Resources, Inc., and the 1199SEIU Home Care Workers East Union. Please stay tuned for more information about a 2018 event. We are reviewing new options and ways for consumers to recognize and honor the work of personal care attendants.

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The 2017 winners of the Paul Kahn Awards for PCA Service

Front row (l. to r.): Rebecca Gutman, 1199SEIU; awardees Teresa Cramphorn, Milka Exantus, and Caitlin Bukolsky

Back row (l. to r.): Lisa Sirois, executive director, PCA Workforce Council; awardees Erika Olson and Joanne Ventura; council member Janet Rico; and Jesse Caplan, chair of the PCA Workforce Council

"Caitlin said that she stayed with the job for seven years because she grew to love the relationship with her consumer and the appreciation that her efforts bring."

"Caitlin wants to feel she has made a difference, not only for Kevin, but also for his family."

"Milka likes to approach this work from the perspective of a friend and to help the whole family system."

Caitlin Bukolsky—WESTERN MA

Caitlin began working as a PCA when she was a 19-year-old single mom with no special training or professional experience. Caitlin said that she stayed with the job for seven years because she grew to love the relationship with her consumer and the appreciation that her efforts bring. After working for Kent, Caitlin said she now understands that being a PCA is more than a job: "It's a match." She and Kent have a bond based on how much they "grew to care about each other," and have developed "a real friendship." She noted that when she is with Kent in the community, she "becomes his second voice when he needs one." Caitlin described her appreciation for the difficulty that people in a wheelchair have in navigating the community, and how some people do not treat these individuals with respect. Caitlin is currently enrolled in a program at Bristol Community College to earn the prerequisites for the RN Bridge Program that she plans to begin next fall.

Teresa Cramphorn—NORTHEASTERN MA

Teresa first met Kevin Rowe, her first and only PCA client, when he was seven years old. Teresa started out as his physical therapist, but has worked for him as a PCA since 2007. Teresa is also a supervisor at Coastal Connections, where she manages 14 staff members and also works with Kevin through a dual contract with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Teresa loves "hands-on stuff" most of all. The most challenging part of being a PCA for Kevin, she stated, is dealing with his behavioral outbursts. She wants to keep him safe, which is more difficult during his outbursts. She wants to feel she has made a difference, not only for Kevin, but also for his family. "I'm not just a PCA for the child. The whole family is involved," Teresa said. "It's very rewarding work." Teresa received a B.S. in physical therapy from Northeastern University in 1988.

Milka Exantus—GREATER BOSTON

Milka believes she was destined to do PCA work. She feels that it is in her heart to care for people, and she needs to know she can make a difference. Before coming from Haiti to Boston to be near her family, she was a certified nursing assistant and a homecare worker for 17 years. Milka's current employer is her mother, Marie. Someone had seen Milka taking care of her mother and suggested that her mother apply for the PCA program. Milka also helps other people in her parents' building and considers all of them her parents. Every time she feels like quitting because the work is difficult or she does not have enough money, people tell her she has a gift, which pulls her back in. The most difficult part of the job for Milka is that it may take a while for people to become comfortable with receiving assistance. Milka likes to approach this work from the perspective of a friend and to help the whole family system. "People don't want to be taken care of," Milka said. "They want companionship and support."

Erika Olson—CENTRAL MA

Erika has been Paul's PCA for the last eight years, including now, while he is under hospice care. "Erika has demonstrated the kind of commitment we hope all people will aspire to," stated Paul. "She is always willing to take on added responsibilities." Paul feels he can always count on her. For Erika, her relationship with Paul feels more like one between family members. They agree that they have a partnership based on mutual trust. Erika grew up in Leverett (near Springfield), MA, and has always been interested in assisting people. Although she works as a full-time medical assistant, she still provides 10 hours a week to Paul's care. She is a team-oriented person and works to motivate the PCAs she trains and manages and who also work for Paul. Erika started a new position this month as a care coordinator with a chronic care management company. She will assist people leaving hospitals, nursing facilities, and rehabilitation centers so they can live at home and in their community. Erika's long-term goal is to obtain an advanced degree in health management.

Joanne Ventura—SOUTHEASTERN MA

Joanne learned about PCA work seven years ago from friends working in the field. She thought it sounded interesting, and decided to become a PCA. The most satisfying thing about her job is providing services directly to her consumer; and there is nothing about PCA work that is unsatisfying to her. Joanne assisted her uncle Arthur Sousa in leaving a nursing home facility, after a six-month stay, to move into his own apartment. As well as providing much of his direct care, Joanne manages all of her uncle's medical appointments, banking, prescriptions, shopping, and laundry, and also trains his other PCAs. Arthur says Joanne is one of the most responsible and dependable people he knows. He is basically home-bound and credits Joanne's help for the "big improvement in my quality of life."

"Erika's employer says of her, 'Erika has demonstrated the kind of commitment we hope all people will aspire to.'"

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Join the Council on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/MassPCA

Free Training Opportunities for PCAs

ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS

ADULT FIRST AID/CPR/AED

In this course, you will learn about standard first aid with CPR/AED for adults. Upon successful completion, you will earn a certificate, which is valid for two years.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

In this course, you will learn the safety skills needed for workers at risk of on-the-job exposure to blood or other body fluids that could cause infection. You will receive a certificate valid for one year once you've successfully completed the workshop.

COMMUNICATIONS AND BOUNDARY SETTING

In this class, you will create a work plan and a sample job description. You'll also learn communications skills that will help you respectfully and assertively present boundary-related issues to a consumer/employer.

NUTRITION AND DIABETES

In this course, among other things you will learn how to read nutrition labels and plan meals on a budget. We'll also teach you diabetes basics, such as recognizing high- and low-blood-sugar symptoms.

ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA

In this course, you will learn about both the causes and treatment of dementia; differences between dementia and Alzheimer's disease; managing tricky behaviors; and tips for self-care.

MEDICATION SAFETY

This course will teach you common dosage/timing abbreviations and signs of medication reactions. You'll also learn about resources such as Poison Control and pill-recognizer websites.

BODY MECHANICS AND TRANSFERRING

In this course, you will learn and practice basic body mechanics for safely lifting/transferring your consumer/employer.

FUNDAMENTALS OF CARE

This course will provide you with basic information on professionalism, confidentiality, ethics, and communication. These tools can help you to reduce conflict, as well as assisting you with infection control, universal precautions, and proper body mechanics.

MULTISESSION CLASSES

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

This 13-week class is designed to help you improve your speaking and reading skills in English. Assessment for class placement required.

TOPICS IN COMPUTERS

This eight-week course will give you hands-on practice with keyboarding, mouse skills, operating systems, computer maintenance, Word, and Internet/email.

ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

THINKING ABOUT GOING BACK TO SCHOOL?

You may be eligible for a tuition voucher to help you pay for up two college classes per year at a public college or university. You must be currently working as a PCA with at least one year of employment to qualify.

CERTIFIED NURSE ASSISTANT—CNA

If you are currently working as a PCA with at least one year of experience, you may be eligible to enroll in a CNA training program. The costs of the course, certification test, and uniform will be covered.

Classes fill up quickly! To register, call **(877) 409-8283** or, for more information, email us at infoMA@1199funds.org.

We are available Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



The Council Promotes Meet & Greet Events for Consumers and PCAs

These local events give consumers an opportunity to meet many PCA candidates in their area who are looking for work. These speed-networking-style events allow consumers to meet as many candidates as possible to determine whom to bring in for a full interview. There is no obligation to hire at these events; there is no cost; and you can send a surrogate or representative in your place. Here's what a consumers said about these events: "What a great idea! I have a list of PCAs to call for interviews!"



If you would like to schedule a Meet & Greet event in your area, please call Lisa Marschke at (508) 856-4819 or email her at Lisa.Marschke@umassmed.edu.

2018 Meet and Greet Events:

Brockton

June 20, July 18, August 15
1:00-2:30 p.m.
Old Colony Elder Services
144 Main Street
Brockton, MA
To register call (508) 584-1561

New Bedford

June 27
2:00-4:00 p.m.
Temple Landing
370 Middle Street
New Bedford, MA
To register call (774) 510-5241

August 30, October 25
3:30-5:00 p.m.
GSM Labor Council Office
560 Pleasant Street
New Bedford, MA

Quincy

June 27, August 29,
October 25, and December 19
1:30-3:30 p.m.
1199SEIU Union Hall/MLK Union Hall
108 Myrtle Street, Quincy, MA

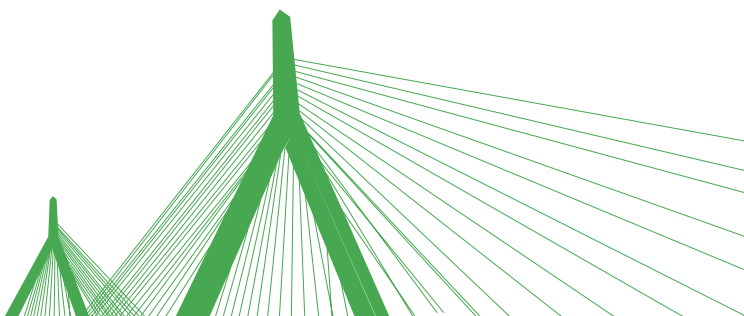
Fall River

July 26
3:30-5:00 p.m.
Fall River Public Library
104 N. Main Street, Fall River, MA

For more information and to preregister for these events, visit www.mass.gov/pca.

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 email, please call (617) 348-5317 or forward your ideas to the address on the right.



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with your PCA.**