

The Bridge

PCAs: a bridge to community living

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

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2nd Annual Paul Kahn PCA Award Event a Spirited Success



Award winners pictured (L to R): Terri Morris, Johanna Montalvo, Luci Johnson, Noah Zizinga, and Patricia Peles.

On September 15, 2011, in Nurses' Hall at the State House, the PCA Workforce Council and 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East presented awards to five PCAs from different regions of the state for outstanding service in support of their consumers/employers. The Paul Kahn Awards for PCA service are named after the late artist and activist, one of the first persons in the Commonwealth to use a PCA.

The event was emceed by Ruth Kahn, Paul's wife, who also served on the selection committee. Co-hosts for the event were Sen. Pat Jehlen and Rep. Kay Khan, both of whom spoke about the importance of PCA work. To resounding applause and cheers from the audience, the skill and dedication of each recipient was detailed before recipients were presented with a plaque and a citation from their local legislator. Each recipient spoke about how important PCA work has been to them.

Honored at the event were Luci Johnson, Johanna Montalvo, Terri Morris, Patricia Peles, and Noah Zizinga. These awards honored not only these five individuals but also the dedicated work of the more than approximately 30,000 PCAs working in the MassHealth program throughout the Commonwealth.

During her closing remarks, Veronica Turner, Executive Vice President for 1199SEIU, asked for greater recognition of the work done by PCAs.

Profiles of the 2011 Paul Kahn Award Winners



Luci Johnson of Lowell

Luci was nominated by the father/surrogate of David, a 44-year-old male diagnosed with cerebral palsy and spastic quadriplegia. Two years ago, David transitioned from living with his parents to living in his own apartment. Luci visited him on her own time, including during an ice storm, to calm any fears caused by the new environment. The management of David's building has chosen him as "resident of the year."



Johanna Montalvo of Worcester

Johanna Montalvo met her consumer/employer and helped her for about a year before being paid through the PCA program. Johanna said she believes in providing care for those who need it, something she learned in her native Dominican Republic, where a high value is placed on caring for others. "The most important part of my job," Johanna said, "is that I feel useful and I like helping people." Johanna has joined others at the State House to advocate for full funding of the PCA program and fair wages and benefits for PCAs.



Terri Morris of Middleborough

A former registered nurse, Terri has spent the last 30 years committed to the PCA program. When asked what she likes best about being a PCA, Terri said, "I'm helping someone's life be independent." Tom, Terri's consumer/employer, describes her as being prompt, professional, and caring. "She takes her job seriously," explains Tom. Terri has taken a leadership role on behalf of PCAs in the Brockton area.

Patricia Peles *of Springfield*

Both parents of Brian, a 22-year-old man with severe disabilities, nominated “Trish,” as Patricia is known to them. Trish has provided care to Brian since he was four years old. When Brian was in a full body cast for 10 weeks after serious surgery, Trish devoted herself to Brian’s care, maintaining a level of cleanliness that impressed staff at the hospital. Trish meets Brian’s bus from his day program every afternoon and cares for him until his parents get home from work. “We are totally at ease,” Brian’s father said, “knowing Brian is in great hands every day.”



Noah Zizinga *of Watertown, MA*

Noah was born in Uganda and came to the United States when he was in his mid-30s. For 14 years, Noah worked as a PCA for Jimi Tierney, a long-time manager at the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL). About being a PCA, Noah said, “This work fulfilled me.” Noah has recruited others to work as PCAs. As Jimi’s PCA, Noah was a presence at BCIL. When Jimi died earlier this year, BCIL hired Noah as a skills trainer. Due to his diligence and hard work, his hours at BCIL were recently increased.



Congratulations to these five very deserving honorees.

Council and Union Agree to New Contract

PCA Training Is Funded

This past June, the PCA Workforce Council and 1199SEIU reached agreement on a new labor contract. Facing an economic outlook that was bleaker than at any time in the past 20 years, members of the Council and Union bargaining teams began meeting in February. The first contract was due to expire on June 30.

The 40-plus-member union negotiating committee and the four-member Council delegation met four times between February and June. The new agreement provides that the current rate of pay (\$12.48/hr) will be maintained through June 30, 2012, when the new contract expires.

The Commonwealth is contributing \$1 million to a fund for training PCAs. The fund will be administered by the 1199 Training and Upgrade Fund, under the supervision of the Labor Management Committee. The new contract also resolves the issue of union security. The parties agreed that, as a condition of employment, all PCAs will have to pay 2% dues or a similar agency fee. PCAs can write to the union and apply for financial core contributor status, which will lower their payment to 1.2%. The contract provides that the parties will meet again in January 2012 to begin negotiations on a new contract.



Members of the 1199 bargaining committee celebrate the signing of a new contract. Seated at the table are (L to R): Joe Bellil, Council Treasurer, Jack Boesen, Council Director; lead Council negotiator Doug Shatkin; 1199SEIU Executive Vice-President Veronica Turner; and Vice-President Rebecca Gutman.

Transitions



Asst. Secretary for Disability Policies and Programs Christine Griffin

In April 2011, Dr. Jean McGuire, Chair of the Council and Asst. Secretary for Disability Policies and Programs, left the Department of Health and Human Services to return to academia. Dr. McGuire served as Council Chair for four years, during which time the Council was

staffed, the first PCA collective bargaining agreement was signed, and the Council's PCA referral directory became operational. Her skills and dedication were essential to the success the Council achieved in all of these areas. At Dr. McGuire's last Council meeting, Vice-Chair Paul Spooner offered a motion, passed unanimously, to thank her for her leadership.

From April through September, while the search for a new Asst. Secretary was underway, Stanley Eichner, General Counsel for the Department of Elder Affairs, served as interim Chair of the Council. Atty. Eichner oversaw the conclusion of labor negotiations for the second labor agreement.

During the summer, EOHHS Secretary JudyAnn Bigby announced the appointment of Christine Griffin as the new Asst. Secretary. Ms. Griffin previously served as Deputy Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and as a Commissioner on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Secretary Bigby also appointed Christine as the new chair for the Council. "When I left Massachusetts for Washington," said Asst. Secretary Griffin, "legislation creating the Council had just been passed. I am pleased to see what the Council has accomplished and look forward to working with the Council to achieve its mission."

The Council is Now Accepting Nominations for THE 2012 PAUL KAHN PCA SERVICE AWARD

The PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council, in collaboration with 1199 SEIU Health Care Workers East, will present the 3rd annual Paul Kahn Awards for PCA Service in September 2012.

Nominations may be made by consumers, PCAs, families, and nonprofit and government agency staff.

Five PCAs from different regions of the state will be selected, based upon:

- dedication to their work;
- longevity of PCA service; and
- actions that increase the value and image of PCA work.

If you know of one or more PCAs whose service and dedication to PCA work deserves recognition, you can submit his or her name for consideration. Nominations

should be made on the form included in this edition of The Bridge.

Please remember to provide us with your contact information and the nominated PCA's telephone number, so the selection committee can contact you and the PCA.

Nominations can be submitted in the following manner:

**MAIL: PCA Workforce Council
600 Washington Street, Room 7269
Boston, MA 02111**

FAX: 617-348-8515

E-MAIL: pcacouncil@state.ma.us.

Nominations must be received by June 1, 2012

PAUL KAHN AWARD FOR PCA SERVICE 2012 NOMINATION FORM

(The entire form must be completed.)

Name of Person Making the Nomination	Relationship to PCA	
Address	Phone Number	E-mail
Name of PCA Being Nominated	Number of Years Working as a PCA	
Address	Phone Number	E-mail
1. Tell us how the PCA has shown dedication to a consumer and to PCA work.		
2. Tell us whether and how the PCA has mentored, trained, or recruited other PCAs.		
3. What has the PCA done to enhance the value and image of PCA work? Please include any other information that you believe is relevant.		

Submit additional pages if needed.

fraud fraud fraud fraud fraud

Fraud

All MassHealth PCA consumers have a responsibility to be sure that they, or their surrogates, are managing their PCA services in accordance with the rules and regulations of the PCA program. Historically, there have been relatively few instances of fraud in the PCA program. Despite its infrequency in the PCA program, it's important to remember that fraud is not only a crime, but also wastes money and can weaken the PCA program. Any suspicion of fraud must be reported to the Office of the State Auditor's Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) for further investigation and action. Their number is 617-727-6771. Your PCM agency or fiscal intermediary (FI) are also required to report any suspicion of fraud on the part of a consumer, a PCA, a surrogate, or other party.

Some tips:

- Make sure that your timesheet is filled out accurately and only for time that your PCA actually worked.
- If you are hospitalized, your PCA can be paid for taking you to the hospital and picking you up, but cannot be paid for any of the time that you are in the hospital.
- MassHealth can pay your PCAs only to provide you with physical assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) (such as bathing, dressing, eating, mobility assistance, and medication assistance) or instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) (laundry, shopping, housekeeping, transportation to medical appointments, etc.). MassHealth cannot pay your PCA for recreational, social, or respite activities.
- Please remember that, as the PCA's employer, you must pay your PCA for any hours worked, even if you think the PCA did not do a good job. If you do not pay your PCA, your PCA has the right to file a complaint for nonpayment of wages with the Attorney General's Fair Labor Division.
- Remember to track the number of hours that your PCAs work. Your PCAs should be hired to work only up to the number of hours per week or per night that Masshealth has authorized for you. If you overbill your weekly hours, you run the risk of running out of units on your prior authorization (PA) before it expires. Similarly, billing for more hours than have been authorized may also result in a fraud report. If your medical condition has changed and you require more assistance with ADLs and IADLs, you may contact your PCM agency to request an increase in your PCA hours.
- The FI will not pay your PCAs and you will be responsible for paying them if:
 - you are no longer eligible for MassHealth on the dates submitted on the time sheet;
 - your PA for PCA services has expired and has not been renewed; or
 - you do not have enough units on your PA to cover the hours worked by your PCA.

Council Outreach Continues with Workshop at Summer Conference

In late June, the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission, Mass. Commission for the Blind, Mass. Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Mass. State Independent Living Council joined forces to sponsor a two-day conference for consumers. Held at the Four Points Sheraton in Norwood, the conference featured workshops in the areas of vocational rehabilitation and employment, community supports/independent living, and advocacy.

The Council's workshop, titled "PCA Workforce Council—a Force for Independent Living," was presented on the first afternoon of the conference. Council Director Jack Boesen began the session with an overview of the Council's efforts to reach out and connect with members of the consumer community. Council member Liz Casey followed with a PowerPoint presentation on the Council's approach to collective bargaining with the PCA union, emphasizing the Council's win/win approach to negotiations. Elenore Parker, President of Rewarding Works Resources Inc., briefed the audience on new features added to the Council's PCA referral directory. Audience response to the workshop was very positive.

PCA Training Project Underway

Bristol Community College Launches Course Emphasizing Consumer Control

A classroom course training PCAs, funded by the federal grant announced in the last edition of *The Bridge*, is underway at Bristol Community College. The first of several pilot courses, aimed at developing a final curriculum, began in September and concluded in late November. Twenty students, seven of whom were already working as PCAs, signed up for the initial course.

The pilot course is being team taught by Elizabeth (Bette) Richmond, RN, and Jim Ross, who not only has worked as a PCA, but also as Executive Director of Community Partnerships, Inc. in Taunton, where he helped train and orient direct-support professionals, including PCAs. Both instructors are committed to the principle that the consumer-control philosophy be woven into the fabric of the course. "Consumer control is a core strength of the PCA program," Mr. Ross said, "because it means the consumer tailors the work of their employee, the PCA, to best meet their individual needs. Strengthening the technical and clinical skills of current and prospective PCAs in the classroom does not have to mean diminishing that strength."

When a final curriculum is developed, it will be made available to all community colleges in the Commonwealth.

PLEASE NOTE

- The Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 10, 2012, will be held in Worcester at the offices of Massachusetts Easter Seals, 484 Main Street (the Denholm building), in the sixth-floor conference room. This meeting will include an open forum from 1:30–2:00 P.M. for PCA consumers and their families to address the Council. Please check www.mass.gov/pca for details. Remember, all Council meetings are open to the public.
- All MassHealth PCA consumers are entitled to a free one-year subscription to the Council's online PCA referral directory. For details, please go to www.mass.gov/findpca.

Job-Posting Service Now Available on Council PCA Referral Directory

By Elenore Parker, President, Rewarding Work Resources, Inc.

Consumers and workers alike should check out the new job-posting section in the Council's PCA Referral Directory. Visit <http://www.findpca.org/Worker-Resources/Massachusetts/Massachusetts-job-listings.aspx> to view recent job listings.

This is an optional service to help PCA consumers reach workers whose experience and background exactly match their needs. Although the Referral Directory is free for consumers who receive MassHealth PCA services, there is a \$10 service charge for posting an ad.

Ads, which are listed for one month, are posted on both the Mass. PCA Directory (www.mass.gov/findpca) and on RewardingWork (www.rewardingwork.org). Only workers who have completed applications on the directory may respond, allowing consumers to learn about potential candidates before contacting them. Persons responding to these ads do not contact the consumer directly; the responses go to the staff of Rewarding Work Resources Inc. (RWR), which manages the

directory. RWR forwards responses to the consumer, who then contacts the applicant(s) of their choice.

The program has been very successful for consumers. Liz Casey, Boston resident and a member of the PCA Council, had success in hiring new PCAs after posting an ad. She commented, "I have found this to be a great help. This way of doing things helps find more-appropriate candidates for each consumer's requirements. The staff at Rewarding Work has been happy to help with any questions or problems, such as editing my advertisement. And, the best news of course is that I have hired two new people this way!"

Cassandra Z. of Whitman, whose daughter needed a PCA, said, "It has been a wonderful and seamless experience in hiring my PCA and I appreciate all your help. Your Web site is a great resource and I would highly recommend it."

For more information on posting an ad, call Rewarding Work Resources toll-free at 866-212-9675, or e-mail RWR at postjobs@rewardingwork.org.

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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Please share this publication with your PCA.