

Volume

8

Winter  
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# The Bridge

PCAs: a bridge to community living

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

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## PCA New Hire Orientation Program to Start in 2014 PROGRAM WILL HAVE OPTIONS FOR CONSUMERS



As part of an effort to ensure that PCAs across the Commonwealth receive consistent and comprehensive information about their jobs, the Council has signed an agreement with 1199SEIU to provide a formal orientation for persons who will be doing PCA work for the first time. This program, which began as a pilot in January 2014 and will be fully implemented in July 2014, will be required of all PCAs who are hired after January 1, 2014. Persons who have worked

as a PCA before that date are exempt from the orientation requirement even if they are hired by a new consumer. PCAs will be paid for attending this three-hour orientation. Although group orientation sessions will be offered throughout the state, consumer employers have the option to provide the orientation themselves as long as they comply with the curriculum being developed by the Council.

The decision to sign an agreement with the union to provide this orientation

came after the Council held two public forums for consumers to discuss this issue. While the agreement with the union spells out the broad outlines of the program, the task of actually building a curriculum and standards for the program has been delegated to a group of seventeen "stakeholders." This group includes members of the Council and of the union; staff from MassHealth; personal care managers (PCMs); fiscal intermediaries (FIs); and four consumers who form the largest contingent in the group.

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## Health Care on the Horizon? NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN IN 2014

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The current labor agreement between the Council and 1199SEIU created a Health Insurance Committee consisting of members of the Council, the union, and other relevant representatives from state government. The contract directed the Committee to “establish a viable method for providing health care benefits for members of the bargaining unit.” It also set out seven specific areas for the Committee to study and research.

The Committee began meeting in 2012 and met several times over the following year. Written, online, and telephone surveys on existing health care coverage and family income were developed and sent to PCAs. The Committee also discussed the feasibility of obtaining federal matching funds for contract benefits and the impact of the Affordable Care Act, and investigated the experiences of other states.

The goal of the Committee was to develop specific recommendations that will assist the parties while bargaining on this health care benefits issue.

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### PCA New Hire Orientation Program to Start in 2014

The main areas to be covered in the orientation session are:

- independent living principles;
- workers’ rights and responsibilities;
- operational procedures of the PCA program in MA (e.g., time records, PCMs and FIs, payment methods, etc.);
- identifying and reporting fraud and abuse;
- resources to support both consumer employers and PCAs including, but not limited to, the role of 1199SEIU, the role of the PCA Workforce Council, the Rewarding Work web portal, and other key resources.

The stakeholder group is also working on accountability and enforcement mechanisms to ensure completion of the mandatory orientation program (for both consumer employers and PCAs). During the period from January 1 through June 30th, pilot classes for the orientation program will be given in several locations. The curriculum will be evaluated and refined. The Council will be looking for both PCA and consumer volunteers for this period. As part of the rollout of the orientation program, a series of workshops for consumers have been held in several

locations. The workshops provided detailed information on the orientation program, including how consumers can exercise their option to provide orientation themselves. Updated information on the forums and the orientation program will be posted on [www.mass.gov/pca](http://www.mass.gov/pca).

# 2013 Paul Kahn PCA Awards

## ANNUAL EVENT DRAWS A LARGE CROWD AND MANY TRIBUTES

The fourth annual Paul Kahn Awards for PCA Service were presented at the State House on the afternoon of October 9, 2013. The awards, recognizing the work of five PCAs from different regions of the state, were held in the Grand Staircase to accommodate the larger crowd attending this year. In addition to the awards, this year's event was expanded to include PCA Day, an opportunity for consumers, PCAs, and other

interested parties to speak to members of the legislature about the critical importance of the PCA program and the difference it makes in so many lives.

The awards were hosted by Senator Michael Barrett and Representative James O'Day, who both welcomed the audience with statements of strong support for the PCA program. A number of legislators and their staffs were in attendance. Rosalie Edes, Assistant

Secretary for Disability Policy and Programs at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, was the keynote speaker. Secretary Edes remarked on the program's growth and success over the past several decades. In addition, Liz Casey, a consumer and former member of the PCA Workforce Council, received a surprise award, recognizing her many years of support and advocacy for PCAs.

The recipients of this year's awards were Kilra Hylton of Dorchester, Angela Bost of Springfield, Page King of Rehoboth, Ron Fillmore of Marblehead, and Barbara Constantino of Fiskdale. Rebecca Gutman, a Vice President at 1199SEIU, closed the program with a call to consumers and PCAs to participate in PCA Day. Jack Boesen, Executive Director of the Council, said, "I was gratified by the number of PCAs and consumers who came out today. The work of the PCAs who were honored at this event is just a sample of the quality work that is being done to ensure that consumer employers can be supported to live independently in the community and control every aspect of their lives." Profiles of the award winners can be viewed at [www.mass.gov/pca](http://www.mass.gov/pca).



Pictured are (l to r) Kilra Hylton, Barbara Constantino, Page King, Ron Fillmore, and Rosalie Edes, Chair of the Council.



At the swearing in ceremony for Council members are: (seated l to r) Tony Williams, Anne Johansen, Cindy Purcell, & Paul Spooner, (standing l to r) State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump & Jack Boesen, PCA Workforce Council Director.

## Two New Members Join the Council

### APPOINTED BY THE OFFICE OF STATE AUDITOR

In November 2013, Suzanne M. Bump, Auditor of the Commonwealth, made one reappointment and two new appointments to the Council for three-year terms. Paul Spooner, the Executive Director of the MetroWest Center for Independent Living, was reappointed to serve a third term. Paul has served as Vice Chair of the Council for the past six years and also serves on the Labor Management Committee. He has participated in collective bargaining sessions with SEIU1199. Anne Johansen of Quincy and Cindy Purcell of Rutland were the new appointments. All three appointees are consumers in the MassHealth PCA program and were sworn in at a ceremony held on December 4 at the State House.

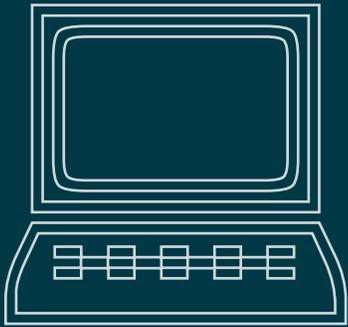
Anne Johansen worked as a ward secretary at the Boston Floating Hospital for Children and as a medical assistant in Denver in the 1970s, and has also held a

number of volunteer positions in elementary schools and hospitals. She spent seven years in four nursing homes in the Boston area and, with the assistance of the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL), moved into her own apartment in 2012. She now actively volunteers with BCIL. Anne said, "I bring to the Council a determination to see an adequate workforce of well-trained PCAs in place and ready for everyone wanting to leave nursing homes and return to living freely in their communities."

Cindy Purcell was seriously injured in an automobile accident in 1977, and became a consumer in 1979, regaining her independence through participation in the PCA program. She began working for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in 1987 and is now a senior rehabilitation counselor. Cindy is a long-time board member at the Center for Living and Working in Worcester, and currently serves

as chairwoman of their board of directors. Cindy received the 2005 MRC Citation for Outstanding Performance, the 2000 Massachusetts Easter Seals Personal Achievement Award, the 1997 June C. Holt Meritorious Award, the 1997 MRC Commissioner's Outstanding Performance Award, the 1994 Community Connection Award from the American Occupational Therapy Association, and, in 1983, the Governor's Citation for "Helping People Help Themselves." In 2006, the National Spinal Cord Injury Association inducted Cindy into their Hall of Fame. Biographies and pictures of all Council members are posted at [www.mass.gov/pca](http://www.mass.gov/pca).

In addition to the announcements of these appointments, Tony Williams, who is leaving the Council after serving for three years, received a citation from Suzanne Bump, commending him for his service.



## CONSUMERS

Would you like faster, more frequent news from the Council?

The Council is developing additional ways to communicate with consumers. If you want to be part of these changes, please send your e-mail address to us at [pcacouncil@state.ma.us](mailto:pcacouncil@state.ma.us).

Thank You.



In October, the PCA Workforce Council, 1199SEIU, and Rewarding Work Resources, Inc. (RWR) presented Liz Casey (c) an award for her achievements on behalf of PCAs . Also pictured (l to r) are Rosalie Edes, Workforce Council Chair; Elenore Parker, RWR; Rebecca Gutman, Vice President of 1199SEIU, and Jeff Keilson, RWR.

## Liz Casey Retires from the Council

“Liz brought both grace and strength to all of her endeavors on behalf of consumers and PCAs.”

Liz Casey, one of the original members of the PCA Workforce Council, retired from the Council in August to pursue other personal interests. Liz joined the Council in 2006, and served on the Council bargaining committee that negotiated the first PCA labor agreement. Liz was also a member of the Labor Management Committee and served as co-chair for the first two years. “Liz brought both grace and strength to all of her endeavors on behalf of consumers and PCAs,” said Jack Boesen, Council Executive Director. “Liz can be proud of the legacy she has left for the Council.” At the recent Paul Kahn PCA Awards Ceremony, Liz was honored for her commitment to improving the economic status of PCAs and strengthening the PCA program.

## LOOKING to hire a PCA?



Remember  
[www.mass.gov/findpca](http://www.mass.gov/findpca).  
Over 7,000 PCAs are listed,  
along with their preferences  
and qualifications.

## Council Continues Outreach to Consumers “LISTENING TOUR” PROPOSED



*Jack Boesen, Executive Director of the Council, answers a question at the 2013 S.I.L.C. conference. Seated is Council member Ann Ackil, who participated in the workshop.*

As has been the case in previous years, the Council continues to reach out to consumers in a number of ways. In June 2013, the Council, along with the Massachusetts Council for Home Care Aide Services, presented a workshop on training opportunities that are available for PCAs. A panel presented information to an audience of consumers on the Personal and Home Care Aide State Training (PHCAST) program, which was developed with assistance from a federal grant, with the training programs established through collective bargaining (see *The Bridge*, Vol. 7). Interest in the programs was strong, and members of the panel took questions for almost an hour after the presentation.

In September, at a conference sponsored by the Statewide Independent Living Council (S.I.L.C.), the PCA Workforce Council presented a panel explaining its priorities for the coming year. Details of the Council's work on orientation, paid time off, and health care were presented. Rosalie Edes, chair of the Council, also spoke about the Council's plans to improve communication with consumers.

Beginning with their December 10 meeting, the Council launched a listening tour. Council meetings and separate sessions will be held throughout the Commonwealth in order to provide consumers with opportunities to speak directly to the Council. The December meeting was held at the Worcester public library, and included a public comment period to solicit consumer input on the Council's agenda and priorities. For more information, go to [www.mass.gov.pca](http://www.mass.gov.pca), or call the number on the back of this newsletter.



## **Consumers!**

**Make sure your PCAs have access to the latest training opportunities through the Home Care Training Benefit.**

**Call 877-409-8283, ext. 7 for more information.**

**Courses include the following.**

### **Adult First Aid/CPR/AED–PCA**

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certificate for Standard First Aid with CPR/AED for adults (valid for two years).

### **Blood-borne Pathogens/Universal Precautions**

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certificate for dealing with on-the-job exposure to blood or other body fluids (valid for one year).

### **Communications and Boundary Setting**

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better ways for PCAs to communicate with their consumer/ employer and learn new skills to build respectful and effective relationships.

### **Computer Skills**

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basic computer skills, including Windows, mouse control, document creation, editing, spreadsheets, and charts.

### **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

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for improved speaking and reading skills in English.

### **In Addition:**

**Certified Nurse Assistant Training (CNA) Tuition Vouchers for college.**

# PCAs Gain Paid Time Off

## BENEFIT TO START JULY 2014

When the Council and the union signed a new labor agreement in 2012, the contract included a provision stating that PCAs would receive a benefit of paid time off (PTO), beginning in July 2014. Because this agreement was reached at the end of the negotiations, the contract language covered only this benefit, and indicated that it would be subject to an annual \$1.5 million cap on payments. The details were left for the Labor Management Committee (LMC) to determine.

Beginning in spring 2013, the LMC began addressing the specifics of what a PTO benefit would look like. As a starting

point, the LMC adopted the structure outlined by the union in their original proposal. That approach called for the fiscal intermediaries (FIs) to review PCA work hours twice a year, in July and February. Workers who had 100 or more hours per month for the months of April, May, and June would qualify for PTO. The same procedure would be used for the months of November, December, and January.

Council staff conferred with MassHealth and staff from the FIs on the issue of how many PTO hours the cap could accommodate. The FIs performed several test runs to assess how

many PCAs worked 100 hours or more per month for each designated period. The resulting numbers showed that five hours of PTO could be provided for each period without exceeding the \$1.5 million cap. This would provide an annual total of 10 PTO hours for qualifying PCAs. Payments for the earned PTO time would be mailed to PCAs within 90 days of being earned.

The Council and SEIU signed a side-agreement letter at the end of November; PCAs will start qualifying for PTO in July 2014 based upon their work record for the previous three months.

### *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](mailto: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 617-573-1694 or forward your ideas to the address on the right.

### How to Contact Us

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**Please share this publication with your PCA.**