

HOMEfront

NH Nursing Assistant Day • June 5, 2001

Home Health Aides Honored at NH Nursing Assistant Day 2001



2001 Home Care Nursing Assistant of the Year nominees

Over 300 Attend Second Annual New Hampshire Nursing Assistant Day

On Tuesday June 5, over 100 nursing assistants, their families, colleagues and supervisors gathered on the State House Lawn under perfect sunny skies for a celebration of the important contribution made by nursing assistants in all healthcare settings. The annual event is sponsored by the Home Care Association of New Hampshire, New Hampshire Health Care Association, New

Hampshire Hospital Association, New Hampshire Association of Residential Care Homes, New Hampshire Association of Counties (County Nursing Homes), and The Healthcare Initiative of the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund. Joining the sponsors at the event to offer thanks and recognition were Jennifer Wierwille Norton, representing the Governor's office, Donald Shumway, Commissioner of Health & Human Services, Cynthia Gray, Executive Director of the NH Board of Nursing, and Representative Larry Elliot, himself a certified nursing assistant.

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Community Benefits Bill Yields Improvements in Reporting Process

Granite State Home Health Association, the government relations arm of the Home Care Association, proposed legislation this session to continue the exemption for the smallest of healthcare charitable trusts from the reporting requirements of the community benefits law passed several years ago. In drafting SB 99, the Association was responding to the overwhelming increase in regulatory burden felt by home health agencies over the past five years and questioned the cost/benefit equation of this new requirement.

Although the bill passed the Senate, the House Commerce Committee opposed an automatic exemption from the community benefits reporting law for any health care charitable trust regardless of size. House members agreed, however, that the process in place is burdensome and should be streamlined in some way. Ultimately, the final version of SB 99 only gave the Office of Charitable Trusts (OCT) the authority to grant 12 month extensions to organizations so that they can coordinate with other community organizations to complete the required assessment, planning and reporting activities.

But the greatest improvements in the process were achieved during discussions with OCT staff and Commerce Committee members while the bill was being debated. First, OCT agreed to develop a streamlined reporting mechanism for all health care charitable trusts that are subject to the community benefits reporting law. Second, and most

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**Home Care
Association
of New Hampshire**

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Each participating health care facility selected one of their aides as their "nursing assistant of the year" and nominated that person for state recognition. As Margaret Gilmour, President of the Home Care Association of New Hampshire, told the attendees, "Every nursing assistant here today is a great source of pride for the agency or facility they work for, and for the entire workforce of aides in this state, and I trust for their own family and friends as well." Addressing the home health aides specifically, Gilmour added, "Without you, thousands of people, young and old, would not be able to remain in the comfort of their own homes. You provide far more than a bath, a meal, a clean and safe house. You offer your clients a caring relationship, a smile, a chuckle, sometimes a shoulder to cry on or a non-judgmental ear to hear their opinions and concerns."

BENEFITS, continued from front

important, was the OCT's reconsideration of their interpretation of the reporting requirements in the original bill. RSA 7:32-e states that "every health care charitable trust shall develop a community benefits plan" and the Office of Charitable Trusts had required a plan and report from each trust individually. However, RSA 7:32-1 states, that health care charitable trusts may satisfy the assessment, planning, and reporting requirements "individually or in a combination with other health care charitable trusts..." (emphasis added) These provisions are in direct conflict, and the Office

Home Care Nursing Assistant of the Year

HCANH presented the 2001 Home Care Nursing Assistant of the Year award to Cherie Leavitt, a certified nursing assistant (CNA) employed by Connecticut Valley Home Care in Newport, New Hampshire. Cherie was selected from an impressive pool of nominees for her leadership qualities, initiative and dedication to her work in hospice. According to her supervisor, Joan Baillargeon, Cherie goes far above and beyond the requirements of her position. She developed a system to track bereavement services, and was instrumental in gaining the inclusion of a hospice CNA representative on the Board of Directors of the New Hampshire Hospice Organization. She recently completed training on advanced care planning and this fall will be participating in community forums designed to educate the

of Charitable Trusts has agreed that the broader interpretation will be the policy for the future.

The end result of the Association's efforts have, thus, yielded a significant benefit for all healthcare charitable trusts and will allow the community benefits reporting law to serve its original intent: charitable healthcare organizations can work together to assess the needs in their communities, plan together how to meet those needs, and report back to the state and their communities together on their efforts and progress.



Cherie Leavitt, an employee of Connecticut Valley Home Care, receives the 2001 Home Care Nursing Assistant of the Year Award. From left: Margaret Gilmore, President, HCANH, Cherie Leavitt, Laraine Strobel, and Nancy Ueda, CT. Valley Home Care Nursing Assistants and Joan Baillargeon, Clinical Director, Connecticut Valley Home Care, Inc.

public about end of life care decisions. Cherie also volunteers countless hours to help with hospice-related events and willingly makes unplanned visits to clients when asked, even in the middle of the night. Nominated by her peers to receive the Nursing Assistant of the Year award, Cherie's highest compliment came from her supervisor who said, "If I am ever sick and in need of services, I would be honored to have Cherie provide care for me."

The nominees for 2001 Home Care Nursing Assistant of the Year were:

(* Pictured in photo on page 1)

- * **Susan Dextraze**, Home Health & Hospice Care
- * **Pam Valliere**, Androscoggin Valley Home Care Services
- * **Pete Ceplon**, Concord Regional VNA
- * **JoEllen Ricard**, VNA of Franklin
- * **Marylin Kimball**, Meredith Public Health Nursing Association
- * **Robin Eastman**, VNA/Hospice of Southern Carroll County & Vicinity
- * **Darlene Hough on behalf of the entire CNA team**, Community Health & Hospice
- * **Sharon Rhodes**, Portsmouth/Derry/Salem Home Health & Hospice Services
- * **Jean Frey**, Lake Sunapee Region VNA & Affiliates
- * **Katherine Currie**, Living Innovations Home Care, Inc.
- * **Dorothy Strout**, North Country Home Health & Hospice
- * **Kathryn L. Powers**, Carroll County Health & Home Care Services
- * **Cherie Leavitt**, Connecticut Valley Home Care
- * **Valorie Graton**, Pemi-Baker Home Health Agency
- * **Zena Costache**, VNA of Manchester and So. NH
- * **Roberta Sullivan**, Weeks Medical Center - Home Health Services
- * **Sarah White**, Home Healthcare Hospice & Community Services
- * **Annette Richardson**, Homemakers of Strafford County
- * **Janet Hackett**, Your VNA (Rochester/Rural District VNA)
- * **Paula Kimball**, Souhegan Home & Hospice Care
- * **Gloria Sweatt**, Upper Connecticut Valley Home Health
- * **Doris Lathrop**, VNS of Southern Maine & Seacoast NH

2001 Home Care Service Award Presented

The Home Care Association of New Hampshire (HCANH) presented its 2001 Home Care Service Award to Valerie Acres, lobbyist for the Granite State Home Health Association. Ms. Acres is employed by Sheehan Phinney Capitol Group, a government relations affiliate of Sheehan Phinney Bass and Green. The announcement was made at the HCANH Annual Meeting on June 13, 2001 in Bedford, NH.

The award is given annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to home care in New Hampshire. Acres has served as the association's lobbyist for five years, and has estab-



Valerie Acres, left, receives the 2001 Home Care Service Award from Susan Young, Executive Director, HCANH.

lished a reputation at the Legislature as an honest, well-

informed, professional advocate. Her representation of home care providers at the State House has been critical in the success the Association has had in securing support for Medicaid rate increases, confidentiality of quality assurance records, reduced administrative burden

related to community benefits reporting, and many other leg-

islative issues.

In addition to her representation at the Legislature, she advises on strategy and testimony, and has delivered training on legislative advocacy to home care providers. According to Margaret Gilmour, President of the Home Care Association of New Hampshire, "Valerie has become a valued member of the Association team, and we are most pleased to have her representing the association and the home care industry in New Hampshire."

HCANH Thanks Legislators for Support of Home Care

At its Annual Meeting on June 13, HCANH expressed its appreciation to three state legislators who have offered particular support for home health care issues this session, as well as over the years.

Representative Alida Millham

Well known in home care circles for her years as a CEO and trustee at Community Health & Hospice in Laconia, Representative Millham has continued her public service in the State Legislature following her retirement. Not only was she a co-sponsor of SB 99 (see related article), but she also advocated for adequate home care funding, speaking specifically about the problem of low wages paid to direct care staff, in part a result of low reimbursement rates for state programs.

Representative Joe Kenney

When approached by Maryellen LaRoche, Director of Carroll County Health &

Home Care, on the administrative burden imposed by the new community benefits reporting requirements, Representative Kenney, a second term legislator from Carroll County, was willing to take on the challenge in the House. As a member of the Commerce Committee, he made every effort to persuade his colleagues that the benefit of this reporting does not outweigh the cost for smaller healthcare charitable trusts. While he was not completely successful in his efforts, he was a tireless supporter of home care and was instrumental in achieving



Pictured above with Sen. Gordon are Susan Young, Executive Director of the Home Care Association of New Hampshire (left), Margaret Franckhauser, Executive Director of Community Health and Hospice in Laconia and Jane D'Ovidio, Executive Director of the Newfound Area Nursing Association in Bristol, New Hampshire.

the many improvements that resulted from SB 99.

Senator Ned Gordon

Senator Gordon has long been a supporter of home health

care, beginning with his service as a Board member at Newfound Area Nursing Association in Bristol. He was one of the only senators to question the application of community benefits reporting to VNAs when this legislation was first proposed in 1999, and quickly stepped up to the plate to sponsor SB 99 in an effort to lessen the administrative burden on smaller VNAs. He has been an eloquent and

forceful speaker on the value of home care as an essential community service in the Senate, and we appreciate his support over the years.

For more information on home care, visit our website:

www.homecaresh.org

Home Care Is Independence Every Day

Home care embraces technology to enhance client independence

Over the past five years home care providers have had to contend with major changes in federal reimbursement policies intended to contain costs, burdensome amounts of regulatory paperwork and a critical shortage of home care workers. (A recent survey sponsored by The American Hospital Association reported that paperwork now rivals patient care in terms of time spent. The study found that in home care, every 60 minutes of patient care delivered generates on average 48 minutes in paperwork!) These pressures have led the industry to look toward technology to help meet the increasing demand for home care.

Home health care is no stranger to technology. Intravenous therapy (for the administration of antibiotics, chemotherapy and pain management drugs), various types of dialysis, ventilators and pumps have been routinely used to treat individuals in their homes for the past 15 years. Previously, this type of care was available only in an intensive care setting. Now home care agencies are exploring new technologies designed to allow nurses to spend more time on patient care and less time on paperwork, to make significant improvements in productivity and efficiency and to improve the quality of and access to care for clients and their families. In addition,

technology in the home care setting has brought even greater gains in client independence.

Telemedicine can help reduce paperwork burden, enhance productivity and improve care

Home Health Visiting Nurse Association, a Lawrence, Massachusetts agency that serves clients in Hillsborough and Rockingham counties, has implemented a handheld "palm" computer system. The computers have increased the amount of time a home care nurse can spend in each home on actual patient care by eliminating cumbersome paperwork. In addition, the technology has enhanced communication between the home care nurse, physician and client by providing more timely information about any changes in the client's medical condition. "I really think this will eventually free our nurses and other professionals to do the kind of work that brought them to the profession in the first place," said Joan Stygles Hull, of Bedford, New Hampshire, CEO of Home Health VNA. "By partnering with (the palm computer company) we are able to provide more efficient care and make better use of our clinicians' time and skills."

Telemedicine can improve service to clients, families and doctors

Telemedicine units are being used by the Lake Sunapee Region Visiting Nurse Association (LSRVNA) in New London to supplement regular nurse visits. Even patients in remote or hard-to-access areas can now have their vital signs checked easily and regularly using the telemed units which transmit data via pager or telephone line to the agency. The results are evaluated by home care nurses and then faxed to the client's physician. The units have helped reduce unnecessary emergency room visits, prolonged hospital stays and premature nursing home placements. For rural clients, the telemed units have offered the peace of mind that their health is being monitored even on the days when the home care nurse does not visit.

Home care supports independence every day for clients, their families and even home health staff. By embracing technology, home care providers have been able to extend their reach and provide service more efficiently. And most important of all, clients benefit from improved access to quality health care services where they prefer to receive it—in the comfort of their own homes.

The Home Care Association of New Hampshire (HCANH) is a membership organization which enhances the ability of agencies providing home health care to deliver quality services to New Hampshire residents. The Association carries out this mission through education, networking, research, leadership, and public policy information. With 40 member agencies, HCANH is the only association of home health providers in the state and a member of the National Association for Home Care.

HCANH is your resource for information about home health services, providers and issues. Call us at 1-800-639-1949, or visit our website: www.homecarenh.org.



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