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Bering Omega Community Services  
Care for Elders  
Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston  
ChildBuilders  
CHILDREN AT RISK  
Christ the Good Shepherd Catholic Church  
Coalition for Behavioral Health Services  
Collaborative for Children  
Communities In Schools  
DePelchin Children's Center  
Family Services of Greater Houston  
Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc.  
Gateway to Care  
Good Neighbor Healthcare Center  
Gulf Coast CHIP Coalition  
Harris County Healthcare Alliance  
Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston  
Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children  
Houston Food Bank  
IntraCare Hospitals  
Jewish Family Service  
Justice for Children  
Legacy Community Health Services, Inc.  
Memorial Hermann Healthcare System  
Mental Health Association of Greater Houston  
NAMI Metropolitan Houston  
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.  
Northwest Assistance Ministries  
San Jose Clinic  
SEARCH  
South County Community Clinic, DBA The Community Clinic  
Spaulding for Children  
Target Hunger  
Texas Children's Hospital  
The Arc of Greater Houston  
The Center for Success and Independence  
The Arrow Project  
The Network of Behavioral Health Providers  
United Way of Greater Houston  
Wesley Community Center  
YMCA of Greater Houston

## Community Care: Personal Care Attendant Training

**Position Statement approved by One Voice: November 6, 2006**

**Issue/Concern:** Personal care attendants enable older adults and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes rather than institutions<sup>1</sup>, resulting in better quality of life and less cost<sup>2</sup>. However, no training is required for attendants. Consumers of in-home attendant services have reported countless stories of lack of dependability and lack of preparation, especially around the special needs of dementia and/or severe physical disabilities<sup>3</sup>. Turnover and retention for attendants is extremely high (1998 turnover rate was 180%<sup>4</sup>). It has been documented that hands-on training directly relating to the work improves the quality of care given AND retention of a competent workforce.<sup>5</sup> Currently federal regulations require Certified Nursing Assistants who provide similar services in a nursing facility to be trained within 120 days of hire, but no formal training or certification is required by the state or federal government for in-home personal care attendants<sup>6</sup>

### Specific Policy Recommendation(s):

- ★ Mandate 16 hours minimum training within 120 days of hire to include hands-on instruction directly related to responsibilities.

**How does this issue/recommendation relate to prevention and early intervention or maximizing federal funds for health and human services?** Proactive attendant training, directly related to actual responsibilities, provided early in one's employment, will vastly reduce the possibility of potential abusive or negligent care as well as reducing turnover. Unless personal care attendants are trained and supported, our most vulnerable citizens are placed in danger.

### Supporting Facts/Research/Resources:

- ★ Currently Texas has only two requirements to become a personal care attendant<sup>7</sup>:
  1. At least 18 years of age and has demonstrated competency, when competency cannot be determined through education and experience, to perform the tasks assigned by the supervisor.
  2. The supervisor must orient each attendant about basic information, such as the tasks to be performed, safety and emergency procedures, and specific situations about which the attendant should notify the provider agency.
- ★ Consumers have made it clear that attendants are not prepared to assist clients with their personal care needs, especially special needs such as dementia, severe physical disabilities or medical conditions. Training curricula has been developed and offered, though since it is not required, attendants rarely utilize it. However, in order to obtain a license in *nail technology* in the state of Texas, students must complete 600 hours of training.<sup>8</sup>
- ★ To become a Certified Nursing Assistant, there are training requirements and training programs. However, 90-95% of the services provided by home health agencies are provided by personal attendants – not CNAs.<sup>9</sup>
- ★ Better Jobs Better Care, a National Research and Demonstration Program of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Atlantic Philanthropies, reports that to improve quality of care and retain a solid, competent workforce, initial trainings need to include hands-on work and focus on on-the-job tasks to introduce new workers to real-life challenges and train them to respond.<sup>10</sup>

## Community Care: Personal Care Attendant Training

**Position Statement approved by One Voice: November 6, 2006 (cont.)**

### **Supporting Facts/Research/Resources:**

- ★ A shortage of qualified, trained and committed personal care attendants means loss of access to in-home services. If Texas cannot meet the demand for home care [attendants], the result is an increase in demand for nursing home and hospital admissions,<sup>11</sup> much costlier alternatives.

**Legislative Outcome:** Senator Ellis authored a bill on this issue, but SB1650 did not pass out of committee.

1 Attendants provide help with activities of daily living - -eating, dressing, bathing, using the toilet, walking, shopping, preparing meals, laundry.

2 Nursing Home costs:

[http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/dads\\_help/care\\_locations/nursing\\_homes.html](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/dads_help/care_locations/nursing_homes.html) ;

Community Care costs: <http://www.dads.state.tx.us>

3 Bavineau, Casado, Long, & Wilson; Meeting the Long Term Challenge:  
[www.careforelders.org](http://www.careforelders.org)

4 Although there is no more current data, there has been no significant progress to address this turnover problem [http://www.directcareclearinghouse.org/s\\_state\\_pfv.jsp?res\\_id=43](http://www.directcareclearinghouse.org/s_state_pfv.jsp?res_id=43)

5 <http://www.bjbc.org/news.asp?pgid=186>

6 [www.pascenter.org/home\\_and\\_community/TexasStateMedicaid.pdf](http://www.pascenter.org/home_and_community/TexasStateMedicaid.pdf)

7 Texas Administrative Code

8 [http://www.beautyschoolsdirectory.com/faq/license\\_tx.php](http://www.beautyschoolsdirectory.com/faq/license_tx.php)

9, 11 [www.dhs.state.tx.us/publications/SB95reportMarch2001.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.tx.us/publications/SB95reportMarch2001.pdf)

10 <http://www.bjbc.org/news.asp?pgid=186>

**Contact:** Dianne Long at 713-558-6396 or [dlong@shelteringarms.org](mailto:dlong@shelteringarms.org)