

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 19, 2010

Child Abuse Conference at The Property

April 13, 2010 from

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Member/Provider Council meets in Globe at the P/GLTC Offices

April 20, 2010

Disability Awareness Day at Casa Grande City Parks & Recreation

April 29, 2010

Elder Abuse Conference at Casa Grande Holiday Inn

May 8, 2010 from

9 a.m. to noon

Oracle Triad Senior Health Expo at Mt. Vista Junior High School

May 11, 2010 from

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Member/Provider Council meets at Pinal/Gila Council for Seniors in Casa Grande

A Member's Story

Continued from page 1

Don't be afraid to speak up and ask for more information, tests, treatment and consideration for your concerns. You have a right to be heard and to receive the best care possible. The hardest step is the first one.

Outcomes will be better, if you take the time to:

- Prepare yourself before meeting with health-care providers. Learn as much as you can about your conditions and treatments. It can be an intimidating process, but often we have no choice but to advocate for ourselves.
- Be willing to tell your story. You live it, so you know it best.
- Be organized and communicate the facts in a logical way.
- Stick to the important points. Figure out what is most important for the other person to hear and relay the information as concisely as possible.
- Arm yourself with knowledge, it is your strength and will give you the confidence to say, "Listen up! I am part of my care team and my health care decisions need to be made with me, not for me."



PINAL • COUNTY
wide open opportunity

Getting ready for an Emergency

APS, a local power company, has created the Medical Care Program, an outage and preparedness program to help customers who are need to use life sustaining medical equipment.

The program will help you create a plan for use when the power goes out. Medical Care customers are told ahead of time about when power will be out in their area, giving you the chance to prepare and not be caught off guard.

An example of life support devices are:

- Kidney, Hemodialysis and Peritoneal dialysis equipment
- Ventilators and oximeters
- Feeding or infusion pumps
- Suction machines
- Oxygen concentrators (continuous use only)

If you are an APS customer and would like to know if you qualify for this program, go online at:

www.aps.com/main/services/OutageCenter/OutageCenter_14.html

and fill out the online application. Or you can talk to someone by phone at (800) 253-9405 ext. 6884 or (602) 371-6884.

PINAL/GILA LONG TERM CARE "LET'S TALK CARE" MEMBER NEWSLETTER

Spring 2010

Volume 9, Issue 1

Self Advocacy: A Member's Story



April Sawyer, author

Standing up for yourself and telling someone how you feel is not always easy. For some, it may take years before they are able to find their voice and speak out. April Sawyer, a member of P/GLTC has graciously agreed to write and share her story of self advocacy.

Written by April Sawyer

One of the first times I felt the need to say, "Listen up, Doc! Something isn't right here," I was experiencing several symptoms that were very unusual for me. So, I decided to call my physician.

At the appointment, the doctor asked me questions about what was concerning me. I had noticed that I was rapidly gaining weight rather than losing it, feeling numbness and tingling in my feet, drinking large quantities of water, having spells of extreme fatigue and irritation. I was also losing periods of time. This was the scariest symptom of all as there were times when I couldn't remember where I had been or what I had been doing in short blocks of time.

The physician's first thought was diabetes. He had his nurse take a blood sugar reading. It

was normal. He sent me on my way with a promise of future tests to see if he could find out what was going on. The next day I left my job as a hospice nurse at 7a.m. and headed home. I pulled into my driveway and glanced at the clock on my dash. It said 2 p.m. I had lost seven hours! I found groceries in my car's back seat and a message on my answering machine from my mother telling me that I had left my purse on her table. I had no recollection of any of it.

I decided that these events could not have been caused by an alien abduction and was determined to find out everything I could about diabetes. I went to the library and after a couple hours of reading, I was armed with a good amount of knowledge about diabetes. I called my doctor and asked for a HbA1c blood test. This test provides an average blood glucose measurement over the past six to twelve weeks. He didn't feel it was necessary. He felt he had already ruled diabetes out. But I stood firm and he agreed to do a fasting test. The results indicated that my blood sugars were dangerously high. Specifically, my results came back as 17.4% with my blood sugar at 1012.

I was immediately hospitalized in an effort to bring those numbers down. If I had not stood up for myself and advocated for the testing, I could have gone into a diabetic coma and died. A little knowledge and the confidence to push for further testing saved my life.

In my opinion, the single most important thing for you to remember when faced with a health crisis is that you need to be an active part of your healthcare team. You are your strongest advocate!

Continued on page 4



PINAL • COUNTY
wide open opportunity

Pinal/Gila Long Term Care
971 N. Jason Lopez Circle,
Bldg. D
Florence, AZ 85132

Phone: (520) 866-6775

Fax: (520) 866-6720

Website: www.pinalcountyaz.gov

1990—2010

20

Years of
Service

Pinal/Gila
Long Term Care

MISSION STATEMENT

Pinal/Gila Long Term Care (P/GLTC) provides comprehensive healthcare in an efficient and innovative manner

by a skilled, motivated and trans-cultural workforce to enhance the quality of life for our consumers.

Risk Factors for Bone Fractures

Osteoporosis is when bones become weak and can break from an event as simple as a minor fall. This affects four times as many women as men. In fact, one in every two women over the age of 50 is likely to have some signs of low bone density.

Even more, you may not even know you have it until a fracture occurs. These events occur most often in the hip, spine, or wrist. Hip fractures are of great concern since they often require major surgery and can result in not being able to move around ever again.

The good news is that osteoporosis can be found and treated. Bone density testing is a painless test that can calculate your bone density by checking the mineral content of your bones.

If you think you are at risk, some risk factors are:

- Personal history of fracture as an adult
- Menopause or removal of ovaries
- A personal or family history of fracture or osteoporosis
- Weight under 130 pounds
- Any tobacco use or high alcohol use

All tests are completely pain-free. If your clothing contains no metal, you may not even have to put on an exam gown. You simply lie on a padded table while low-level x-rays scan your bones. The radiation level used is about ten times lower than that of a standard chest x-ray.

If you would like to learn more, or would like to schedule a bone density screening test, consult with your P/GLTC case manager.

Disability Support Group

HopeKeepers is a faith-based support group in the east valley that meets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Central Christian Church of the East Valley, Mesa. The group gives support to people who live with a disability.

If you would like to start a group or know of a support group (faith-based or different) that is in your area that

you are willing to share with others, please send the news to: rhonda.montgomery@pinalcountyaz.gov.

We will try to share these things with other members in a future newsletter.

If you do not know of any support groups but would like to find one, please let us know by calling your case manager. We will try to help you find one.

¿ Habla usted español?

Do you speak Spanish, or another language other than English? If so, you should know that translation services are provided at no cost to P/GLTC members 24 hours a day, seven days a week for visits to health care providers.

P/GLTC urges all approved providers to ask their patients which language they prefer to speak, instead of asking what languages they can speak. The Language Line service should be the first resource you access if your healthcare provider does not speak your primary language. You may also choose to ask a family member to translate. It is important that you decide whom you prefer to have translate for you.

To access the Language Line, ask your doctor to dial 1-800-367-9559. All P/GLTC providers have been taught the process. After checking their information, they will then talk with a translator. In most cases, a translator is there within seconds. Once the translator is on the line, the doctor will explain the purpose of the call and ask the translator questions or data to translate for you. You will have a chance to talk to the translator. You may ask as many questions as you would like.

Medicare Drug Plans

Did you know that as of November 15, you can go to the Medicare website to sign up for a drug plan for next year? To do this, go to the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder Tool. You will find this on the Medicare website at:

www.medicare.gov/pdphome.asp

Click on the "enroll" button and fill in the data you are asked for. Be sure that you review the premium and benefit details for each plan very well before you make a choice. Some plans have higher fees in 2010. This may be a reason for you to change your drug plan. In some cases, the increase is small. But the small increase may still make an impact on you. P/GLTC suggests you take the needed steps so that you have the coverage you need when the time to sign up begins later this year. More Medicare Part D premium and benefit details will be given in September. Medicare will also provide the names of the Medicare Drug plans that are not going to renew their contracts for 2010. To get the most current data on Medicare Part D coverage, premiums and benefits, visit the Medicare website at:

www.medicare.gov

or call

1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

Behavioral Health Services

You may be surprised to know that you can make the decision to receive behavioral health services all by yourself. If you do, it is called a referral. A family/ member who is a designated natural resource or guardian can also do this and so can your primary care doctor, your case manager, nursing staff, or any health care expert who is working with your case manager.

Case managers will decide if services are needed, but things are set up by you. Case managers who are not experts in this field will make sure that you see a Qualified Behavioral Health Professional (QBHP), at least at first, and then four times a year and as your case dictates. These people will advise what is needed.

Your primary care doctor is told when you are first approved to begin BH services. The staffing form includes your doctor's treatment goals, member/natural

resources report on progress and comments from the case manager and the QBHP; it is given to your doctor, and other involved parties, for review and comment.

If you feel that you may require BH help, talk about your concerns with your case manager or primary care doctor.

If you do not know who to call, you can call the numbers below. You must say which county the person who needs help is in. This is not always the county where they live.

- For Pinal or Gila counties call: Nursewise (866)495-6735**
- For Maricopa County call: EMPACT (480)736-4944**
- Or (480)784-1514**
- For Pima County call: SAMHC (520)622-6000**

You will get a member handbook when your case manager comes to see you for the first time. This is called an initial visit. You will also get a copy of the book once a year after that. If you do not get one when you first enter the program or do not get a copy once a year when it is updated, you need to call your case manager and one will be mailed or given to you. If you did get a member handbook this year, it will not change until next year. If you have any questions, please call your case manager.

What Is Self Directed Attendant Care?

Self directed attendant care is a new way for you to get help with your care. Some of the good parts include:

- More choices in picking the people who care for you
- You can choose how and when care is given
- More control over your self directed attendant care
- Have more control in taking care of your health.

As a member of Pinal/Gila Long Term Care, you decide what attendant care services will best meet your needs. Some questions you should ask yourself before making any decisions are:

- Do I know what attendant care services I want or need?
- Do I want more control over my self directed attendant care services?

You will select the workers you want to provide your attendant care services. You decide if you are happy with your attendant care services. If you are not happy, then you may change the service or the person providing the service.

Ask for help when you want help. If you need more help with things such as:

- How to find or train your workers
- How to fire your workers
- Do you want more training for your worker?

Your case manager can help you get the training you need. You have support. You must keep a record of the time and set the schedule, but you don't have to do the paperwork needed to pay them.

If you think you would like to assign someone as your attendant care provider, please call your case manager. Try to keep in mind there are a few things that are not permitted. You cannot choose from the following people:

- Your spouse*
- Your parents if you are under 18
- Your legal guardians, in most cases.

To get started or to learn more, talk your case manager and tell them you want to know more about in self directed attendant care.

**If you would like your spouse to be your paid caregiver, your spouse must be hired through an agency in order to receive compensation.*

Are you thinking about quitting smoking or feel ready to quit? Help is now available online through webquit. This web-based quitting tool will help you to:

- create a quit plan,
- work through activities such as how to fight cravings
- set goals
- monitor progress from a computer.

You can reach them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The program works best when you work with one of the quit coaches. To learn more go online now at:

www.ashline.org/portal/index.html

or call

1 (800) 55-66-222