

**Social Work Conference Call
Meeting Summary
August 5, 2009**

Facilitators: Paige Hector, LMSW with CARES; Kristin Burns, BSW with JacksonWhite Law; Jill Preston, BSW with JacksonWhite Law

Conference calls are regularly scheduled meetings on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30 PM. Call 1-888-482-3813 and enter the pass code of 3813 to join in!

Topics Discussed:

- Resident with dementia and no family or friends does not have a mortuary indicated on the medical record. The facility serves as the representative payee for social security. The physician and the facility do have some decision-making authority according to Arizona Surrogate Law but probable that resident would be taken to the medical examiner upon death. We discussed the importance of obtaining advance directives and mortuary choice upon admission. Other issues of interest discussed with the situation were anatomical donation options for Life Legacy (888-774-4438 or www.lifelegacy.org) and Science Care (800-417-3747 or www.sciencecare.com). Encouraged callers to contact both organizations and request literature that can be provided to residents and families. Also, investigate whether the individual might be entitled to veteran's benefits which may assist in this situation. Another low-cost funeral option is the Funeral Consumer Alliance (www.funerals.org) for the national website. There are three geographical-based alliances in Arizona.

Funeral Consumer Alliance of Southern Arizona, (520) 721-0230

Funeral Consumer Alliance of Central Arizona, (480) 929-9659

Memorial Society of Prescott (serves Northern Arizona), (928) 778-3000

- For residents who need to spend down assets to maintain ALTCS eligibility or to become eligible for ALTCS, paying for funeral costs/plans is an excellent option. Some mortuaries also offer payment plans.
- Homeless gentleman in the Phoenix area is being discharged from a facility after completing a skilled stay. He is willing to work and needs a place to live (has been to shelters previously). One suggestion offered was Interfaith Community Services. He does not qualify for ALTCS medically. Kristin Burns with JacksonWhite offered to put together a list of resources and share with the caller attendees.
- Common amongst most of the callers today was a feeling of stress related to incredibly tough situations, little or no resources/options to offer people and a lack of training/knowledge of the nursing facility social work position. One caller stated that some issues in her building are "weighing on her heart." Dealing with all these challenges is one of the toughest parts of nursing home social work. Rapid admissions and discharges, incredible work loads coupled with extremely demanding regulations, policies and
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procedures is a recipe for burnout. Kristin and Jill with JacksonWhite and Paige with CARES offered support to all the callers, via phone, email or in some cases on-site visits. Kristin and Paige are teaching a one-day seminar on social work in the LTC setting on 8-18 at the CARES training center (Cave Creek and Sweetwater). Then on 9-8 Paige is teaching two 4-hour workshops at the CARES training center: Documentation and Psychosocial Assessments. Ongoing mentorship and training are absolutely crucial for nursing home social work designees and social workers to be successful and most importantly, love working in nursing homes.

- Challenging situation for a gentleman who a few years ago was deemed incompetent (before moving to AZ). He is applying for Medicaid. His daughter suffers from drug addiction and the power of attorney for this man resides out-of-state. He wants to be a DNR but since he is “incompetent” he cannot make this decision legally. Social worker at the facility believes he is capable of making his own decisions and wishes to advocate on his behalf. Suggested she ask the medical provider for a psychiatric consult to examine decision-making capacity. This gentleman has extensive health issues and it was also suggested that the psych consult would be helpful in determining if he is depressed.
 - Related to this case, the issue of choosing a new POA arose. If a resident is capable of understanding the POA document, he/she can complete new forms at any time, thereby assigning a new POA/agent. The old document becomes null and void. Even if a person has some cognitive impairment, if at the time he/she is completing the POA documents, the individual demonstrates understanding (i.e. ability to explain the document and consistency with the choice for new POA), it is appropriate to complete the documents.

This information is not intended to constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon in lieu of consultation with appropriate legal advisors. The information is for informative or educational purposes only.