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Primary Care Site Newsletter

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Enrollment Numbers As of August 3, 2009

Senior Care Options (SCO)
= 2253 members

Contact Information

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Boston, MA 02108
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Claims Information

Commonwealth Care Alliance
148 State Street, 10th floor
Boston, MA 02109
ATTN: Claims Department
1.800.306.0732

Current Member Issues

Issue 5

Summer 2009



Dear Network Provider:

Whatever we may think Commonwealth Care Alliance is, Congress views us as a Fully Integrated Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan. That means that we are one of approximately 30 Special Needs Plans out of nearly 1,000 in the United States who receive combined Medicare and Medicaid financing to care for "Duals" (those individuals who are both Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries).



"Duals" have now moved to front and center in the health care reform debate. Why? The "Duals" represent about 16% of Medicaid beneficiaries in each state but they account for nearly 50% of Medicaid spending nationwide. Concurrently, they also represent about 15% of Medicare beneficiaries that account for nearly 26% of Medicare spending. That is a lot of healthcare spending -- about \$250 billion every year! Because care for "Duals" has been so uncoordinated, with such poor management of chronic illness, and many missed opportunities to prevent hospitalizations or delay nursing home placement, there is extraordinary opportunity to substantially reduce costs through improved care. That is why there is such intense policy interest in Fully Integrated Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans in general, and Commonwealth Care Alliance in particular, as potential models to better coordinate care and manage costs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Master".

Robert J. Master, MD
President & CEO

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Staff Spotlight



Orissa Viza, RN Clinical Coordinator

Orissa Viza recently joined Commonwealth Care Alliance in the role of Clinical Coordinator. We interviewed Orissa to find out a little more about her:

Contracts Corner

Please join us in welcoming the following providers to Commonwealth Care Alliance's network:

Name	Location	Provider Type
Bay State Medical Equipment Distributors & Supply	Brockton	Durable Medical Equipment
Adventure, Inc, dba Loving Care Agency	Springfield	Adult Day Health
Hospice Services of Massachusetts, LLC	Wareham	Hospice
Janice Funk, PhD	Bradford	Behavioral Health
Alliance Imaging, Inc	Andover	Radiology
Alternative Care Providers, Inc	North Chelmsford	Durable Medical Equipment
Easton Eye Consultants, PC	North Easton	Ophthalmology
Greater Boston Home Health Care, LLC	Boston	Certified Home Health Agency
Harvard Square Optical, Inc	Cambridge	Optometry
Imaging Consultants, Inc	Andover	Radiology
Metropolitan Anesthesia, LLC	Westwood	Anesthesiology
Richard L. Jasiak, OD, PC	Haverhill	Optometry
Alegre Dental Center	Lynn	Dentist
Center for Community Health, Education & Research, Inc (AICide Center)	Mattapan	Behavioral Health
East Longmeadow Skilled Nursing Center (Berkshire Healthcare Systems)	East Longmeadow	Skilled Nursing Facility
Geriatric Authority of Holyoke	Holyoke	Skilled Nursing Facility
Hallmark Imaging Associates, PC	Wareham	Radiology
Millard T. Hennessee, DPM, PC	South Boston	Podiatry
Atlantic Prosthetics and Orthotics Co, Inc	Westport	Durable Medical Equipment

Questions? Please contact Provider Network Management at 617.426.0600 ext. 234

Pharmacy Program

Important Pharmacy Change

Over the past three years since the inception of the Medicare Part D benefit, Commonwealth Care Alliance's pharmacy program has endeavored to offer an array of flexible coverage policies that are generally not found in other Medicare Part D options to reduce "hassle". However, regulatory requirements and financial constraints are making it increasingly difficult to continue some



Tell us about yourself:

I moved to Boston a year ago (via Cape Cod) from Rochester, NY. I have three sons in their 20s, and I enjoy the outdoors and the arts.

Tell us about your professional background:

I have a background in community health and not for profit organizations. There were a few corporate stays thrown in too.

What does a typical workday look like for you?

Meetings, communicating with our primary care sites regarding member status, managing member status in Commonwealth Care Alliance and MDS software. I also just help out where I can.

What is the best part of your job?

Working with the very professional, competent, and caring staff of Commonwealth Care Alliance and its community.

What makes Commonwealth Care Alliance special?

What drew me to Commonwealth Care Alliance was its commitment to a very important and overlooked population that I happen to also care about.

What do you like to do when you are not at work?

I learn and explore this wonderful city; enjoy my friends.

If you could invite any five people to dinner, who would you choose?

Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, Dalai Lama, Lily Tomlin, and my mother.

**New Staff Hires
April-June**

Kimberley Caffrey, RN, *Nurse Case Manager*

Commonwealth Clinical Alliance

Emma Chung, *Business Analyst*

**Commonwealth Care Alliance
central office**

Gina Ciaramitaro, *Compliance*

of these policies.

Historically, Commonwealth Care Alliance has allowed network clinicians the flexibility to continue to prescribe brand name medications in instances where generic equivalents are available, as a convenience to those patients and clinicians who are reluctant to switch to a generic equivalent for a variety of reasons. However, we can no longer justify this "convenience" given the substantial increase in expenditures inherent in this policy and the lack of evidence of quality compromise when "generics" are substituted for brand name medication (e.g. simvastatin for Zocor). Therefore, **effective August 1, 2009, Commonwealth Care Alliance will only cover the generic equivalent of multi-source branded medications.**

Care managers have been notified which of their patients are currently on branded medications and should be switched to generics before August 1. If the prescribing clinician believes that the generic alternative is not medically indicated, the clinician may request an exception by calling our pharmacy benefit manager Express Scripts at 1.800.417.8164.

Questions? Please contact Basem Shebli, Pharmacy Director, at 617.426.0600 ext. 238 or bshebli@commonwealthcare.org

Consumer Involvement

Healthy Eating for Successful Living in Older Adults

Commonwealth Care Alliance is currently piloting an evidence-based community health program for its members called *Healthy Eating for Successful Living in Older Adults*. The six-week course focuses on nutrition and lifestyle changes that promote better health.



We are working with Hebrew Senior Life to offer the program to our members beginning in Fall 2009 as a complement to *My Life, My Health*, a chronic disease self-management program, which our members have been participating in since 2006.

If you are interested in finding a *Healthy Eating* program in your community or if you would like more information on how your patients can benefit, contact Rosa Palacios at the number below.

Questions? Please contact Rosa Palacios, Department of Health Education and Caregiver Training, at 617.426.0600 ext. 226 or rpalacios@commonwealthcare.org

Summer Institute on Evidence-Based Practice

Achieving Excellence with Evidence

Laurie Wojtusik, Western Massachusetts Clinical Coordinator at Commonwealth Clinical Alliance, recently presented at the Summer Institute on Evidence-Based Practice in San Antonio, Texas. The conference, which has convened annually for the past seven years, allows "participants to learn 'what works' in building care processes and supporting care providers in the evolving environment of improvement."

As a leader and expert, Commonwealth Care Alliance was invited to

Program Manager
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
central office**

Stacey Nguyen, *Registered Nurse*
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
Clinical Group**

Maureen Olsen, RN, *Nurse Partner*
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
central office**

Kate Shoch, *Nurse Practitioner*
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
Clinical Group**

Polo Vernet, *Registered Nurse*
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
Clinical Group**

Orissa Viza, RN, *Clinical
Coordinator*
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
central office**

Marlena Witczak, *Registered Nurse*
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
Clinical Group**

Harold Young, *Provider Network
Developer*
**Commonwealth Care Alliance
central office**

present on two papers created as part of a AHRQ Healthcare Innovations Exchange:

[Health Plan-Financed, Nurse-Led Care Coordination Improves Quality of Care and Reduces Costs for Latinos With Chronic Illnesses and Disabilities](#)

[Plan-Funded Team Coordinates Enhanced Primary Care and Support Services to At-Risk Seniors, Reducing Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits](#)

The response to our presentation was extremely positive. As Laurie notes, 'Commonwealth Care Alliance is clearly creating the "evidence" for evidence-based practice in care management.'

Questions? Please contact Laurie Wojtusik, Western Massachusetts Clinical Coordinator, at 413.306.3599 or lwojtusik@commonwealthcare.org

If you have submissions or suggestions for this Primary Care Site newsletter, please send me a note via email at nfry@commonwealthcare.org or call me during office hours at 617.426.0600 ext. 244.

Sincerely,

Nerissa J. Fry
Communications Coordinator
Commonwealth Care Alliance

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