

## From Our Offices

Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse services have received lots of bad press recently. Unfortunately, too many of the horror stories you've read about are correct. However, these articles only tell part of the story. Many agencies, including HOMECARE Management Corporation, continue to provide valuable service to many of North Carolina's most vulnerable citizens, and we continue to do so while adhering to high ethical standards. It is important that each of you realize that HOMECARE does not engage in such practices, and we will not tolerate any of our employees doing so. We are very proud of those who work with us on behalf of our clients.

Each HOMECARE employee is required to sign our Code of Ethics. This code prohibits all of the activities described in the recent newspaper articles. We take this code, HOMECARE's reputation, and our own personal reputations seriously. If any of you have questions about our policies and practices or are aware of anything that you think may be unethical, we encourage you to come forward and let us know about it. If you have any questions about what is right in a given situation, we strongly encourage you to contact your supervisor. Each of us bears responsibility for holding us all accountable. If we do not know about questionable practices, we cannot do anything about them.

Consumers and their families also bear part of the responsibility for ensuring that all services are provided according to the highest standards. As one example, you should review any timesheet before you sign it to make certain everything is correct; check for such things as the worker inadvertently entering the wrong date. Of course, you should never sign a blank sheet. Again, if there are questions, or you feel that someone is acting improperly, you should contact HOMECARE supervisory or management personnel.

It is also helpful to realize that much of the negative media attention to MH/DD/SA services is due to poor implementation of Community Support by the state. No one is able to deny that they did not provide clear guidance and training on their interpretation of how the service should be rendered. In addition, they did in some instances provide, in writing, directions that they later decided did not fit with their intent when they wrote the definition. It was not until at least a year after the new service was implemented that they began to give clear direction.

The authorization process and Value Options (VO) also presented major problems. VO simply did not have enough trained staff to handle the authorizations in a timely manner, and when they requested that the state allow them to delay handling adult authorizations until the child and adolescent ones had been caught up, their request was denied. This led to their falling further and further behind, losing authorizations, and making mis-

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## Management Corporation

*News from the Mental Health Division*

## Employee Spotlight

**Mary Graham** has been an asset to HOMECARE Management Corporation since she began working with us in July 2004. Mary has experience working at Pender Hospital, Pender County Health Department and other agencies assisting people with disabilities. Mary is currently working with two Community Support clients and one Developmental Therapy client.



She has shown a tremendous amount of dedication and patience that shows in the progress of her clients. When asked where she gets her patience Mary replied, "Gaining insight into mental illness, developing necessary skills to assist with clients, conversations with the QP and recognizing, reminding myself throughout the day that this job is not about me." A client Mary has worked with for four years commented on her job performance by saying, "She's the best. She is professional, trustworthy and the best all around. The company is blessed to have such a person. She truly cares about her clients and who she helps. She deserves a place in management so she can teach others how to work with clients." Mary was asked what she has learned from this job that will be helpful to others and she replied, "I learned to use my resources such as attending as many workshops as possible, reading articles, contact with support circle at HOMECARE, and know when to seek assistance with problems and concerns." Mary says the most rewarding part of working at HOMECARE is "Seeing and recognizing progress, no matter how small. Being able to use skills to enhance my daily living as well as my clients."

Mary's interests include home improvement projects, houseplants, and spending time with her grandchildren, ages 10 years and nine months.

HOMECARE is thrilled to have such a committed person on our team and we look forward to seeing what else she has to offer her clients.

## Client Spotlight

When **Mark Johnson** first came to HOMECARE Management in June 2007, he was in an assisted living facility looking to become more independent. Due to Mark's disabilities, he needed help in re-learning how to live independently. Through the help of his community support worker, **Johnny Powell**, Mark was able to make remarkable progress. As his independence increased, Mark was able to search for, apply to and move into an independent living group home.



From the beginning, Mark's ultimate goal was to get back into the workforce through Vocational Rehabilitation. With assistance from HOMECARE and his new group home, Mark has applied for and been accepted into the local VR program. He can't wait to begin working and looks forward to becoming even more self-sufficient in the coming months.

Mark's group home director, **Carol McGalliard**, reports that Mark has become more active in the community, including volunteering at the local outreach center. He does such a good job at independent living, she's afraid he's going to "wash the color right off the plates" during chore time! Mark says "I'm very happy where I'm at," and "I'm really looking forward to working again."

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takes. They approved many new consumers for service without really determining if services were necessary and often seemed to cut hours with little understanding of needs.

LMEs also bear some of the responsibility for the failures of reform efforts. In particular, they endorsed a number of providers, who did not have the necessary experience and expertise in providing mental health services, and then they failed to adequately monitor them and take action when they should have been aware of unethical or incompetent performance. There were many problems, but in the worst example we are aware of, the provider recruited many individuals who did not, in fact, have mental health problems and then received authorization from Value Options to provide services to them. This of course was a major abuse and used resources that could have been better directed towards those who needed and could benefit from services.

We do not feel that it is reform itself that was the problem, but rather the implementation of it. There have long been problems in the mental health system, and reform was needed. It was the implementation that caused many of the incidents that are now held up as examples of the failure of reform. It is now up to all of us to correct misunderstandings in the public and to act in a manner to restore the public trust that has been lost.

We encourage anyone with questions or complaints about our service to contact CEO Rankin Whittington at 800-223-2841 ([RankinWhittington@HomeCareMgmt.org](mailto:RankinWhittington@HomeCareMgmt.org)) or Sara Nolan at 800-718-4599 ([SaraGrodeNolan@HomeCareMgmt.org](mailto:SaraGrodeNolan@HomeCareMgmt.org)).

## Anniversaries

It's hard to express just how proud we are of everyone who continues to focus on the consumer and deliver high quality, ethical services year after year. This month we celebrate with **Jacqueline McCoy** of the Statesville office who is completing 9 years of service. **John Henderson** has worked out of the Lenoir office for 8 years and does PRI, CPR and First Aid training in addition to providing direct services. **Rose Frazier, Rose Passmore and Margie Rankin** of Statesville have each provided services for 7 years, and **Tina George** of Whiteville has been with us 6. **Regina Rogers** of Wilmington and **Donna Tucker and Vickie Turner**, both of Statesville, have worked with us 5 years. To top it off, the following are celebrating their 4th HOMECARE anniversary: **Alex Jernigan** of Boone; **Kenya Heath and Travis Scott** of Charlotte; **Jan Montgomery** of Forest City; **Ruth Kalala and Sherry Stokes** of Statesville; and **Carolyn Owens, Edwin Pittman, and Shaquanna Roberson** of Tarboro. We appreciate all you do.

## PaySchedule

Services Delivered	Checks Mailed
March 16-31	April 4
April 1-15	April 21

## Documentation

**Documentation for ALL services except Nursing-based PCS, CAP/DA and CAP/C is due the day after you have finished providing services for the week (Sunday-Saturday), and in no case later than the following Monday.** CAP/DA, CAP/C and Personal Care must be postmarked or delivered the 16th for services delivered the 1st through the 15th and the 1st for the 16th through the end of the month.

## Opportunities For Learning

- **Skill Building Techniques for Community Support Employees**, Tarboro, April 3, 9-10 am
- **DSS—Why, When and How to Refer**, Boone, April 8, 12-2 pm
- **It's Your Life**, Wilmington, April 15, 6-8 pm
- **Adolescence and Substance Abuse**, Charlotte, April 24, 2-4 pm
- **Meet & Eat: Open Discussion and Problem Solving about Working with Consumers**, April 24, Statesville, 6-8 pm
- **Brain Gym**, Lenoir, April 29, 3-5 pm

*Please contact your supervisor for more information on these valuable training sessions and additional opportunities for you to obtain required CS training as well as for required re-certification trainings.*

## Addiction is a family disease

One in five families are affected by a loved one's addiction. Children are the most vulnerable of those affected, and a significant number of children in the U.S. are being raised by an addicted parent.

One million children are confirmed each year as victims of child abuse and neglect by protective service agencies; records indicate that substance abuse is one of the top two problems exhibited by families in 81 percent of their homes. Research suggests alcoholism is more strongly related to child abuse than other disorders, such as parental depression. Studies of family violence frequently document high rates of alcohol and other drug involvement. This is too often the reality for many children that we know and work with.

Often we see children take on family roles as a way of surviving the chaos of their home life. First is "The Hero," who is often a high achiever attempting to fix the family by being as perfect as possible through grades, sports and other achievements. To the outside world they look very successful but on the inside they are feeling inadequate and hurt. "The Scapegoat" is angry, defiant and in trouble with the law. Very often this youth becomes the focus of the family's attention. By focusing on the scapegoat, the family never has to address the larger problem of parental addiction. "The Mascot" is often the hyperactive clown of the family. When family tension rises, this kid goes into action to deflect the tension brewing. He is seen as the "family pet." The "lost child" is most often the invisible member in the family. Withdrawn and quiet, this child has retreated from the family in an attempt to escape the turmoil and chaos. The last family role is the "chief enabler." This child becomes the caretaker and fixer of the family. He or she is often described as a "people pleaser," spending time and energy in an attempt to fix the alcoholic or addict they love.

There is help available for these children and their families. One of the most successful programs out there is FREE and confidential. Al-Anon is a self help support group for adults who have someone they love who is addicted. Al-Ateen is for young people who have someone they love who is addicted. Check your local phone book, treatment center, or recovery club house for a list of meeting times and places. Help break the cycle.

## Client Spotlight (Continued from page 1)

In addition to volunteering in his community, Mark has discovered a newfound passion for antiques and also enjoys utilizing his electronics degree by repairing electronics in his free time. Through the assistance of HOMECARE, his group home and his dedication, Mark has made extraordinary progress toward his goal of becoming employed and as independent as possible in less than a year. Congratulations Mark!