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Opportunities for Living Life (OLL) Newsletter

THE OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

What is OLL?

Opportunities for Living Life (OLL) is charged with developing, operating and administering new program initiatives for SoonerCare. Additionally, OLL is charged with developing collaboration among state and private agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders in creating a system of health care, long-term care support and home- and community-based services support that meets the needs of every Oklahoma citizen.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- What is OLL?
- Quality Oklahoma Team Day
- Nursing Facility Survey Information
- $50,000 Awarded to Oklahoma

THE NEXT OLL NEWSLETTER:

Also — sign up to receive the OLL Newsletter by e-mailing OLL@okhca.org or calling Dena @ 405-522-7343.

OLL Mission Statement

To enhance quality of life for target citizenry by delivering effective programs and facilitating a partnership with the community.

Quality Oklahoma Team Day

Quality Oklahoma Team Day was held May 8, 2007, at the state capitol. Team day gives state agencies an opportunity to show off projects that they have been working on.

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority submitted various projects. The OLL division submitted two projects: Money Follows the Person (MFP) and the Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) training program.

We are pleased and proud to say that MFP won a Commendation of Excellence for all of their hard work.

Nursing Facility Quality of Care Feedback From Nursing Facilities, Residents and Families

Over the next few months, OHCA will be sending out a survey asking about quality of care in nursing facilities.

This information is vital and your feedback is appreciated.

Surveys will be sent to approximately 315 nursing facilities and approximately 2,000 nursing facility residents and families in Oklahoma.

All survey information will be reported anonymously and in aggregate.

OUR WEB SITE HAS CHANGED! DON'T FORGET TO BOOKMARK OUR NEW SITE!

WWW.OKHCA.ORG

"$50,000 AWARDED TO OKLAHOMA"

Project Aims to Expand Oklahomans' Options for Long-Term Care Insurance

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma is one of 10 states selected to participate in a new project that will help develop practical long-term care insurance options for consumers.

In response to recent federal legislation that allows states to pursue public-private partnerships for long-term care insurance coverage, the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) created the Long-Term Care Partnership Expansion Project to help Americans better plan for their future long-term care needs. States taking part in the initiative work with private insurers to create affordable insurance options that protect consumer assets and minimize the risk to state Medicaid program budgets. The initiative is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The Oklahoma partnership project is currently in development, and organizers hope it will be up and running by spring 2008. Gov. Brad Henry and the state legislature approved Senate Bill 1547, sponsored by Sen. Kathleen Wilcoxson, R-Oklahoma City, and Rep. Joan Greenwood, R-Moore, in 2004. The bill authorized the program with the goal of encouraging more Oklahomans to plan ahead for long-term care.

"This is a win-win project," said Cassell Lawson, director of Opportunities for Living Life at the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA). OHCA runs SoonerCare (Oklahoma's Medicaid program), which funds about 73 percent of all nursing home care in the state. It provides coverage for low-income people and many middle-income individuals who have become nearly impoverished by "spending down" their assets to cover the high costs of long-term care.

When finalized, the new project will allow Oklahomans who purchase the long-term care partnership insurance to protect assets equal to the value of their policies, Lawson said.

"By purchasing the insurance, they will be able to provide for their own long-term care needs and still retain assets for their loved ones and family left behind," he said. "People will be protected from having to become impoverished to qualify for SoonerCare, and at the same time, the state will be able to avoid bearing the entire burden of long-term care costs."

The four states that piloted the programs in the early 1990s – California, Connecticut, Indiana and New York – have sold more than 200,000 policies combined. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 enabled additional states to develop these public-private long-term care coverage options.

The other participating states in the new project are Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas and Virginia.

Each of the 10 states will receive extensive technical assistance and a seed grant of $50,000 for participating in the two-year initiative. CHCS is working closely with the George Mason University Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide targeted technical support for the states.

"Consumers, Medicaid programs, and the private insurance industry can all benefit when accessible and affordable long-term care insurance is available," said Wendy Yallowitz, program officer of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

"This is an exciting opportunity to help states design long-term care options for consumers with moderate incomes," said Stephen A. Somers, PhD, president of CHCS. "We hope that the work done by these 10 states can lead the way for others which are considering this important policy option."

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