

Inside this issue:

- Family Care Audit
- Transportation
- On-Call System
- Heat Awareness
- Advocating Member Rights
- Residential Rate Update

Visit Us...

On the web

www.northernbridges.com

At our board meetings

Our Board of Directors meet each month in Hayward. Check our website for dates and times. All meetings open to the public.

Contact Us

For newsletter questions or comments call toll-free: 1-866-306-6499 or email: klovfrels@northernbridges.com

**NorthernBridges'
Mission**

**Providing our members
the best life possible.**

Provider Meetings Schedule Set

Service Provider Meetings

We would like our service providers to have an opportunity to exchange information, ask questions and further build on the relationships we have established. Please bring any concerns or questions you may have for discussion. If there are particular areas you would like addressed to the whole group, please forward to Krista, klovfrels@northernbridges.net, via email prior to the meeting.

August 9, 2011

Great Lakes Visitors' Center
29270 County Highway G
Ashland, WI
10:00am – 12:00pm

August 10, 2011

Hayward Public Library
10788 State Highway 27/77
Hayward, WI
10:30am – 12:00pm

August 11, 2011

City of Rice Lake
Municipal Building,
Lakeshore Room
30 East Eau Claire St.
Rice Lake, WI
10:00am – 12:00pm

Residential Service Provider Meetings

We would like our residential providers to take the opportunity to gather with us to continue to build our relationships and to discuss issues they may have. We are inviting our Adult Family Home 1-2 providers to attend these meetings. In addition to the exchange of information, Susan Joel, the AFH coordinator, will be providing training on a topic of her choosing.

August 9, 2011

Great Lakes Visitors' Center
29270 County Highway G
Ashland, WI
1:00pm – 3:00pm

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State Budget Update

At the time of this writing, the Joint Finance Committee voted to approve an enrollment and expansion cap for the Family Care program. With the approval of both legislative bodies, the membership cap will become effective July 1, 2011. NorthernBridges will be unable to bring potential members off of the ADRC waiting lists except through attrition slots, as all long-term care programs will be put on hold until the next biennial budget cycle in 2013. This will have significant effects on the budget projections that NorthernBridges previously had for the remainder of 2011. We will await the decision of the legislature and keep you updated on the vote.

Family Care Audit

The Legislative Audit Bureau is a non-partisan legislative service agency that recently conducted an audit of the Family Care program state-wide. Results were submitted to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee and are at: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab. Questions on the report can be posed to Paul Stuiber at (608) 266-2818.

Please note that the solvency of NorthernBridges was questioned during the time of the audit due to our being a new organization. Our solvency fund is fully funded and we expect to have our risk reserve completely funded by the end of 2011.

On-Call System

NorthernBridges' core hours are 8:00am - 4:30pm, Monday through Friday with a 24-hour on-call system available. On-call staff is comprised of two Care Managers and one Care Management Supervisor. They can be reached at the hub office from which a member is served. This service should be used to communicate information related to member care only.

Care Managers who are on call do not meet with members in person. Most Care Managers do not meet with members outside of the core hours unless previously agreed upon with the member. If you are experiencing an emergency related to the member, first call emergency services in your area.

On-call staff have access to members' records and can provide emergency contact information, details related to authorized services providers specific to a member, and can discuss back-up plans if necessary. Information shared by on-call staff is shared at the discretion of the employee with regards to what is relevant to the call and the caller. On-call Care Managers have access to Release-of-Information forms and may use them to determine what type of information is shared with the caller.

Common Carrier Transportation

As many of you know, the county common carrier transportation program will no longer be in place as of July 1, 2011. NorthernBridges is working with North County Independent Living (NCIL) to establish a network of volunteer drivers to provide this service to Family Care members. These rides will need to be authorized by care management staff and will be coordinated through NCIL. For each ride, there will be a modifier authorized to indicate whether or not the transportation is "medical or non-medical" – meaning is the trip to a doctor's appointment or is it being provided to support a member's outcome. Educational materials have been sent to members and care management teams are aware of the changes. If you have additional questions, please contact a member of the Provider Network Staff or the Care Manager for your member.

Medical Versus Non-Medical Transportation

Transportation providers – please note that as of September 1, 2011, all specialized medical vehicle (SMV) transportation will need to be coded as medical – using a RD modifier or non-medical – using a RI modifier. More information and guidelines will be distributed as they are received. For additional questions, please contact the Provider Network staff person for your region.



Heat Awareness Day

June 9, 2011 was Heat Awareness Day in Wisconsin. Extreme heat and humidity can threaten the lives of vulnerable adults. Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the U.S., claiming the lives of 138 people in 2010. Keep cool & safe this summer using these tips:

- 1** Never leave children, disabled persons or pets in a parked car - even briefly. Temperatures in a car can become life threatening within minutes. On an 80-degree day, the temperature inside a car even with the windows cracked slightly can reach 100 degrees in less than 10 minutes!
- 2** Keep your living space cool. Cover windows to keep the sun from shining in. If no air conditioner, open windows to let air circulate. If hotter than 95 degrees, use fans to blow hot air out of the window rather than to blow hot air on to your body. Basements or ground floors are often cooler than upper floors.
- 3** Slow down and limit physical activity. Plan outings or exertion for the early morning or after dark, when temperatures are cooler.
- 4** Drink plenty of water and eat lightly. Don't wait for thirst, but instead drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid alcohol or caffeine and stay away from hot, heavy meals.
- 5** Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing. Add a hat or umbrella to keep your head cool...and don't forget sunscreen!
- 6** Don't stop taking medication unless your doctor says you should. Take extra care to stay cool, and ask your doctor or pharmacist for any special heat advice.
- 7** Infants should drink breast milk or formula to get the right balance of water, salts and energy. You may supplement your infant's fluids with an additional 4 to 8 ounces of water per day, but don't dilute formula beyond what the instructions say (unless instructed by your doctor).
- 8** Taking a cool shower or bath will cool you down. Applying cold wet rags to the neck, head and limbs also cools down the body quickly.

Additional safety tips for protecting members and yourselves can be found at <http://ReadyWisconsin.wi.gov>.

Advocating for Member Rights

As caregivers for our members, your advocacy for their rights is always important. NorthernBridges has a Member Rights Specialist on staff to assist members with grievance and appeals issues, to explain the processes necessary, and to mediate discussions between care management staff and members and their guardians. In addition, the State of Wisconsin has an Ombudsman who works with members in our area to ensure their rights are protected. The State of Wisconsin has also developed a hand-out of information titled, *Helping Family Care Members Resolve Problems with an MCO's Care or Services Fact Sheet for Providers*. The hand-out is available at www.northernbridges.com and is an excellent tool for explaining who to contact.

Important note: Encourage members to act promptly to voice complaints about their services or interactions with the MCO, or a change in eligibility.

• Member Rights Specialist at NorthernBridges

Each MCO has at least one staff person designated as 'Member Rights Specialist,' whose job is to assist individual members with issues and concerns that relate to the quality of their care, help them to understand and initiate formal appeals and grievances, and to assist in assuring quality services throughout.

Nancy Tischbein and Karen St. George are the Member Rights Specialists at NorthernBridges. They can be reached at 715-934-2266. (Their numbers can also be found in the Member Handbook.)

• State Family Care Hotline

The Department contracts with our external quality-review organization to operate a hotline to receive complaints about Family Care services. The member, family members, or providers are invited to contact the hotline with any questions or complaints about Family Care program quality.

Hotline Phone: (888) 203-8338

DHS Family Care and Partnership Complaints

c/o MetaStar

2909 Landmark Place
Madison, WI 53713

Fax: (608) 274-8340

E-Mail: dhsfamcare@wisconsin.gov

If no one answers, leave a message and someone will contact you within 24 hours to help get information and resolve the situation. Providers will be asked if they have the member's permission to call; the hotline staff will not investigate without the member's involvement. The matter may be referred to the DHS MCO Oversight team (see below), but will also be tracked to resolution by the hotline staff.

Careful records are kept of hotline calls, so contacting the hotline has the additional benefit of assisting DHS in identifying patterns and trends in complaints.

• DHS Staff Oversight Teams

The Department has designated a small team of DHS staff to carry out lead responsibility for MCO oversight. Hotline complaints are often referred to the Oversight teams.

If you would like to contact DHS Oversight staff directly, email the OFCE mailbox at DHSOFCE@wisconsin.gov

This mailbox is monitored by DHS staff; OFCE managers will make the appropriate assignment for DHS staff to follow up on your email.

Advocating Through Ombudsmen

The Department of Health Services also contracts with independent ombudsmen to assist members in resolving problems with Family Care services. Regional Ombudsmen are available to respond to your concerns in a timely fashion. Both Ombudsmen programs listed below will typically use informal negotiations to resolve your issues without a hearing.

Different ombudsmen serve different age groups:

• Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long-Term Care for members age 60 and older.

Board on Aging and Long-Term Care
1402 Pankratz Street, Suite 111
Madison, WI 53704-4001
Toll-free: 800-815-0015
Fax: 608-246-7001

• Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) for members under age 60.

131 W. Wilson St., Suite 700
Madison, WI 53703
608-267-0214

TTY: 888-758-6049
Fax: 608-267-0368

Madison Toll-free: 800-928-8778
Milwaukee Toll-free: 800-708-3034
Rice Lake Toll-free: 877-338-3724



15954 Rivers Edge Drive
Suite 300
Hayward, WI 54843

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U.S. Postage Paid
Hayward, WI
Permit No. 6

Return Service Requested

Providing members the best life possible.

Residential Rate Setting Update

With the statewide residential rate setting methodology not ready as soon as expected, NorthernBridges has decided to move forward with establishing a rate methodology for our residential placements. In an effort to achieve our goals of consistency, equality, transparency and predictability, we will be examining our current market and members' acuties to determine fair and equitable rates.

If your rates will be affected, the Provider Network staff will be calling to request a meeting to explain the methodology and how it will affect your rates. The explanation of the rate methodology will also be addressed in the August, 2011 Provider Forums. Please see page 1 for more information on the dates and times of these meetings.

Adult Family Home Coordinator News

Sue Joel has started re-certifying our 1-2 bed Adult Family Homes for the third time. We are excited to have hit this milestone. Sue is encouraged by the relationships she has developed with providers of both corporate and owner-occupied homes in this service area. Owner-occupied adult family homes are a unique group of providers. They open their homes to our members and share their families.

If you have additional questions regarding becoming an Adult Family Home provider, please contact Sue at sjoel@northernbridges.net or by phone at 715-934-2266, extension 1131. The Adult Family Home Provider's Guide and application can be found at www.northerbridges.com.

Provider Network Development Staff

Holly Samson - Southern Region:
Rice Lake, Centuria, Ladysmith,
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