

I. Replacing community wide emergency back-up:

An urgent issue for seniors and people with disabilities is what recourse they have when their care giver is unable to work or just doesn't show up. Prior to the privatization push, Pima Health System provided that back up with a Hotline and available PCAs who would come in a timely manner and provide quality care. Currently there is no hotline and there is one employee who is only available on weekends.

The private for profit agencies that have assumed care for many ALTC/PHS clients don't always have skilled personnel available to provide emergency back-up. State wide statistics about issues surrounding Ball vs Rodgers assembled by the Arizona Center for Disability Law indicate that private agencies have a considerable problem with providing emergency back-up care.

*Statewide  
90%*

**Chart #1: Number and Percentage of Gaps Filled by Unpaid Caregiver**

Month	Total Number of Gaps <sup>3</sup>	Number of Gaps Filled by Unpaid Caregiver <sup>4</sup>	Percentage of Gaps Filled by Unpaid Caregiver <sup>5</sup>
October 2008	272	148	54%
September 2008	402	248	61.7%
August 2008	353	207	58.5%
July 2008	429	239	55.7%
June 2008	356	185	51.9%
May 2008	375	198	52.8%

***B. Over 40% of the Time, an Unpaid Family Member or Friend is Used Because No Agency Back-up Worker is Available.***

Some of the agencies contracted by PHS are very straight forward in telling clients that if there is a problem, they are on their own in solving it. Their definition of consumer directed care. This leaves individuals without family or other resources in serious trouble. Office staff, secretaries and administrators are "cross trained" and can be sent out in lieu of a well trained worker. Too often the response is a phone call asking if the client can make do for a shift or more until someone else can be contacted or to find a friend, relative, or passing stranger to fill in.

While this practice is "legal" and may meet the basic immediate need, it certainly does not provide or guarantee the efficiency or quality of care these vulnerable Pima County residents require and deserve. Nor does it actually meet the real legal requirements of Ball vs Rodgers. Although that case is still being

<sup>3</sup> This number was calculated by counting the number of items in the first column of each month's gap reports.

<sup>4</sup> This number was calculated by counting the number of items in the tenth column of each month's gap reports that listed the letters E (unpaid caregiver), F (unpaid community organization) or H (unpaid/paid caregivers).

<sup>5</sup> This percentage was calculated by dividing the number of gaps filled by unpaid providers by the total number of gaps.

appealed, the injunction enforcing the ruling remains in place and all agencies are still legally obligated to adhere to its specific rules.

Pima County/Pima Health System has an obligation to ensure that no one is left alone without necessary care even for a short period of time. Even though PHS has contracted out a majority of home care to private agencies, because Pima Health System is the agent of AHCCCS and Pima County still is responsible for the health and safety of its residents. We ask that the following steps be taken:

1. By February 1, the Emergency Hotline be re-established and advertised in the PHS newsletter sent to all PHS clients and by individual notification by PHS case management.
2. That a core group of PCA's be hired/rehired by the County to provide emergency back-up care for PHS clients 24/7.
3. Given fiscal concerns, that the administration investigates possible means of subsidizing this emergency system long term that might include subscription by private agencies (especially those who are not providing this service themselves) or other private/ public schemes.

#### II. Open enrollment to new complex cases:

A major concern raised during the hearings held last year on the privatization issue was that "complex" or "problem" home care clients are "dumped" by private agencies because they require too many hours of care or care during hours that don't fit a 9 to 5 model of many private agencies. Many of these clients end up in nursing homes or adult care homes with often disastrous consequences. At the very least, people can be deprived of their right to live out their lives in the homes, aging in place or lose their precious independence and quality of life. Although the privatization push was put on "hiatus" new clients have not been allowed to enroll in the PHS ACW program even though that program would best meet their needs. We ask that the following take place:

#### 1. That by February 15:

A. A list of the number of new ALTC clients managed by PHS during 2008 be provided to the Board of Supervisors. This listing should also include information from case management regarding requests for home care, denials of home care, and placements in nursing homes. We also request that a comparison be made to placements in 2007 and identification be made of any trends

B. That an assessment be made of the actual needs of the Pima County community for the care provided by the ACW program and the gaps that have occurred because of the transfer of care to the private sector be provided to the Board of Supervisors. This might include changes in hours, requests for care/services, and changes in life style. This can be part of the overall internal assessment on budget, gaps, impacts and consequences being conducted as part of the budget process now taking place.

2. That a report be made to the Board of Supervisors on any changes in quality of care delivered caused by this shift in care. The report must include tools used for making this assessment and dates when gathered.

3. That a plan be developed to meet the needs of the home care population of Pima County based on the three principles put forward by the Board of Supervisors on January 8, 2008.

- Care is delivered to consumers at a consistently high level of quality
- Consumers must have a voice in these important decisions
- Employees suffer no loss of wages, benefits, or working conditions – on the contrary, they must see improvements in their situation

We believe that this assessment needs to be made now before budget decisions for 2009 – 2010 are formalized. Re-evaluating the ACW program in July after the horse is fully out of the barn may be too late.

#### III. Increase pool of ACWs to meet community needs:

1. By March 1, following the completion of the assessment of the actual needs of the Pima home care community, new ACW's be hired or rehired into the program. This would include both family members and non-family members. No new clients or ACWs have been added to the program since the "hiatus" was declared. PHS clients in the program who needed to change caregivers for whatever reason but still wanted to stay in the program were told there were no workers available and have been shunted into a private agency.

*but has # of ACW's grown in general*

2. Training for the new ACW's would be accomplished in house or by contract. Because the in house training program has been eliminated, we may want to talk about, long term, creating a community consortium that would include JobPath, Pima College, SEIU, etc. Long term goals for this could involve our constituent organizations and the county looking into training grants and outside sources of funding. Immediate needs for training new ACWs could be accomplished by existing, experienced PHS staff.

IV. The other issue we may want to talk about is working together in assessing the possible use of some of the Obama stimulus money for home care needs in the state. We understand that County Administration has already developed and shared a listing of "shovel ready" projects with our Congressional delegation. There is, however, additional monies reportedly coming in the form of Medicaid supplements. This should be of interest to Pima County because this money on the county level would assist in developing these programs.

The Pima Community Task Force on Home Care welcomes this opportunity to work with you on developing a home care system in Pima County that could serve as a statewide example of a quality and accountable program that serves the needs of your constituents and neighbors.