

SUNCOAST REGION NEWS

Mission: The Agency Supports Persons with Developmental Disabilities in Living, Learning & Working in their Communities.

Volume 1 Issue 11

MAY 2008

APD Director Resigns

Jane Johnson is stepping down as Director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities at the end of May. "I truly appreciate the opportunity to serve as the director of APD. We have overcome many challenges this past year while always protecting the health and safety of the people we serve. I will leave feeling the agency has had a positive impact on many people's lives," said Johnson.

"Working with Governor Crist and Lt. Governor Kottkamp has been a wonderful, positive experience that I will treasure my entire life. These two leaders have inspired my unending support and dedication," said Johnson. Johnson accepted the role as Director of the agency in 2007. Although resigning her position as Director of APD, Johnson states she will continue to advocate for individuals with disabilities. ❖

Autism Bill Passes

Legislators approved a proposal that will require private insurance companies to cover children with autism - the Steven A. Geller Autism Coverage Act. The proposal mandates health insurance companies cover \$36,000 a year in autism treatment with up to \$200,000 coverage over a lifetime. "The autism issue is enormous, and compelling and curable," said Governor Crist. "It's been proven that early treatment makes a big difference. If there's a way we can get that done and help these kids, I want to do what we can." The proposal was debated extensively between the House and Senate. "How fair is it to say to the disability community, that if you have autism we're going to mandate coverage for you but if God has blessed you with a child with a different disability, we're not?" asked Rep. Andy Gardiner, R-Orlando. Ultimately, the Steven A. Geller Autism Coverage Act was approved. The bill applies to insurance companies with large group policies only. The bill is expected to provide assistance to less than 15 percent of children diagnosed with a developmental disability. The legislation pushed by Sen. Steve Geller of Cooper City was the last bill to pass the 2008 lawmaking session. ❖

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*"The Grand essentials of happiness are:
something to do, something to love and
something to hope for." ~ Allan K.
Chalmers*

General Appropriations Act for Agency for Persons with Disabilities FY 2008-09 Overview:

- Total budget of \$1.063 billion. The budget is \$42.5 million, or 3.8 percent less than the recurring base budget of \$1.1 billion
- Total loss of federal Medicaid matching funds is \$31 million due to the cut in state General Revenue funds to the agency

Major funding decisions:

- \$43.5 million reduction to waiver provider rates (roughly 5 percent). This figure includes \$24.1 million of federal funds that the state will lose as a result of this decision.
- \$12.4 million reduction to personal care assistance services provided through the waiver by setting rates at \$15 per hour. This is about a 15 percent reduction compared to the current overall average rate paid for this service. This figure includes \$6.9 million of federal funds that the state will lose as a result of this decision.
- \$20.4 million transferred to Agency for Health Care Administration to provide personal care assistance services to children through the Medicaid State Plan pursuant to early, periodic, screening, diagnosis and treatment requirements
- \$2.6 million transferred from the Developmental Disabilities Public Facilities (Gulf Coast Center) to move 60 more individuals into community based settings pursuant to Brown v. Bush
- \$1.9 million reduction to agency administration, community resource start-up funds and headquarters contracts
- \$14.6 million from General Revenue to offset loss of federal funds due to a reduction of the federal Medicaid matching rate
- \$9.6 million to partially restore \$54 million of non-recurring funds provided for the Medicaid waiver in FY 2007-08
- \$1.3 million to continue the successful in-house provision of fiscal employer agent functions for the Consumer Directed Care Plus program which will actually provide net savings to the state compared to a private vendor.
- \$0.6 million to establish a dental services pilot in the Development Disabilities Public Facilities
- \$3.1 million to expedite assessments of all current waiver enrollees by June 30, 2009, using the Questionnaire for Situational Information instrument ❖

Polk Schools Ordered to Pay \$720,000

Judge declared Polk County schools failed in their responsibility to educate an autistic student and must now pay up to \$720,000. Bill and Janie Sammons have fought the School District for four years, stating their son, Andrew, was allowed to graduate without receiving the necessary skills or instructions the law mandates for students with disabilities.

"It is clear (the district) was either unable or unwilling to provide the appropriate services," said Judge William F. Quattlebaum.

Gail McKinzie, Polk County school Superintendent, stated the district is considering filing an appeal.

A decision will be made within 30 days.

If the ruling stands, the district may end up spending \$1.8 million, including \$300,000 that Quattlebaum ordered the district to pay the Sammons for their legal bills.

The district's legal fees have reached \$786,782. ❖



IT Corner

By
Deborah Decker

There have been a few items of interest this month that I wanted to share with everyone. One is the need to encrypt some emails. If you are emailing consumer information, it must be encrypted somehow (HIPPA). Tallahassee is working on setting up Zixmail (through the internet) that will handle that for us and for our WSCs. Directions will follow in a future email or IT Corner.

The other big news for me (and you) is that I can now access your laptops remotely if granted permission by the user (you). If you are having a problem that I can not figure out over the phone or explain how to fix, with a few short activities, I can gain remote access to your computer. From there, I can show you what to do or can fix the problem, thereby saving us all time and money... Hope that helps.

As always, if you have any problems or questions – give me a call. ❖



Medical Case Management News

Highlights:

65G-7

May's edition available here: [Medical Case Management News](#)

The Champion APD Newsletter

Highlights:

- [APD Director Resigns](#)
 - [World Autism Day](#)
- [A New Do for Katie Bowman](#)
 - [Committee on Autism](#)
- [Governor's Commission Looks to the Future](#)
 - [Children's Week](#)
 - [Explore Adoption](#)
- [Stay Safe with E-Mail Alerts](#)
 - [Arc Day](#)
- [SportsAbility Rocks the Capital City](#)

May's edition available here: [Champion Newsletter](#).

APD Waivers

- The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is committed to protecting the health and safety of the people it serves by helping them receive the services they need.
- Over the past year, there have been many changes to the Medicaid waiver program. The changes have been difficult for both APD customers and employees.
- Last year, the Legislature changed the law to require a four-tier waiver system for individuals receiving Medicaid Waiver services from APD.
- The Legislature created four waiver tiers for people who receive services under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver, the Family and Supported Living Waiver, or the Consumer Directed Care Program. The Legislature also created eligibility criteria for the waivers.
- APD is developing a rule that will help assign customers to a tier as required by the Legislature.
- APD is currently identifying the likely tier for each client. APD plans to notify customers of their tier assignment by the end of May.
- The Legislature imposed annual limits on how much the state will spend for services for people in three of the tiers.
- The Legislative limits are: Tier 1 – no limit; Tier 2 - \$55,000; Tier 3 - \$35,000; and Tier 4 - \$14,792.
- Most people will not be affected by their tier assignment. But for some people, the tier assignment will mean that the state will not be able to pay as much for services as it has in the past.
- If a customer's Tier Waiver assignment results in a spending limit lower than the amount that is annually spent on services, he or she should work with their support coordinator to prioritize the services in his or her cost plan so they do not exceed the limit and that the services most important are supported.
- APD is providing information to waiver support coordinators help customers in prioritizing their cost plan to stay within the spending limit, if necessary.
- APD plans to implement the Tiers July 1, 2008.
- Additional information about the Tier Waivers can be located at <http://apd.myflorida.com>.

Employee Service Recognitions

35 Years

Elena Stewart

30 Years

Brenda Porter
Janie Williams
Cathy Winters

25 Years

Barbara Heindel
Jeannie Majerick
Joann Rouse
Eydie Williams

20 Years

Emmi Fields-Stovall
Janice Gardner
Anne Hendon
David LePere

15 Years

Donna Betts
Paula Brooks
Rita Diefenderfer
Millie Melendez
Arinda Perez
John Samuelson

10 Years

Rosie Castillo
Marcie DiGrazia
Edith Golden
Michael Rao
Glorie Singleton
Judy Williamson
Dale Zinn

5 Years

Cheryl Blackwell-Cox
Marian Dandridge
Barbara Smith

Michael Breen
Margaret Rainford
Hilda Robertson

Jude Redding
Brenda Trent
Laurie Harlow



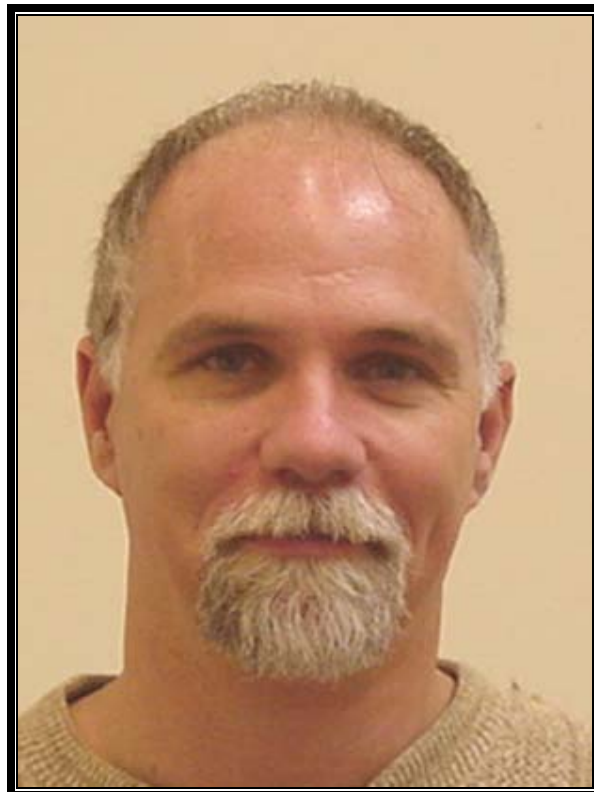
Employee Spotlight

Congratulations

to

Ken Winn

**Masters Degree in Applied Behavioral
Analysis**



Welcome New Employees



Kimberly Wojick
Quality Improvement Specialist



Kelly Alvarez
WSC Liaison



Louise Gonzalez
WSC Liaison



SunCoast Region Welcomes Elyse Cadena

Please give a warm welcome to our special guest Elyse Cadena. Elyse is a senior at Tampa Preparatory School and is joining our APD team for the next three weeks (May 12- May 29) as a student intern. Elyse plans to pursue a career working with individuals with developmental disabilities and will attend USF in the fall. Helene Coutu and staff will mentor her.

Announcements

Florida Office on Disability and Health Survey

The Florida Office on Disability and Health (FODH) National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is conducting a survey for use in their project to improve the health, well being and quality of life of Floridians living with disability. Participation in the survey is voluntary and no compensation is offered.

Follow the link to participate in the survey:

<http://pro20.sgizmo.com/survey.php?SURVEY=BDXSBT43NW824NLE3NADN96265UL00-26357-7990149&pswsgt=1199990891>.

2008 Kids Summer Activity Guide

created and produced by the Prevention, Education and Outreach Department of Florida Health Partners Inc. available at <http://www.floridahealthpartners.com> or call (813) 246-7210 to request a copy.

May 20

“Everything You Need to Know About Your Child turning Eighteen but Were Too Confused to Ask” Workshop

sponsored by the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities

* 6:00pm – 7:15pm * All People’s Life Center * 6105 E. Sligh Avenue * Tampa, FL*

The orientation course consists of two separate units and meets the APD 18-hour pre-service requirement. A certificate of completion will be presented to participants who successfully complete course requirements and pass the post-test. Visit www.flse.net/Entry/welcome.html for details.

May 21

Emergency Preparedness Conference for Persons with Disabilities

10:00am – 3:30pm

Higgins Hall (St. Lawrence Parish)

5225 N. Himes Avenue

Tampa, FL

May 30

Get Out the Vote!

sponsored by Self Reliance Center for Independent Living

Call (813) 375-3965 to RSVP

8901 North Armenia Avenue

Tampa, FL

May 31

Information and Provider Fair for Developmentally Disabled Persons

sponsored by Family Care Council - SunCoast Region & AFIRE

10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

James B. Sanderlin Family Center

2335 22nd Avenue S

St. Petersburg, FL 33712

Meetings

12

Area Steering Committee Meeting

10:00am – 1:00pm
1201 102nd Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL

15

Waiver Support Coordinator Meeting

9:00am – 12:00pm
Pinellas Park Performing Arts Center
4951 78th Ave N, Pinellas Park

19

Family Care Council West Meeting

6:30pm – 8:30pm
1501 N. Belcher Road
Clearwater, FL

22

Supported Employment Meeting

9:00am – 12:00pm
Childrens Board
1002 East Palm Ave
Tampa, FL

28

Family Care Council East Meeting

11:00 am- 12:00pm
1313 N Tampa Street Suite 516
Tampa, FL

*SunCoast Region Training Calendar

May

5

9:00am – 4:00pm
Writing Effective Behavior Plans
St. Petersburg, FL

6, 15, 16 & June 2 & 3

9:00am – 4:00pm
Personal Outcomes Measures for
Waiver Support Coordinators
St. Petersburg, FL

8

10:00 – 12:00pm
Incident Report Training
St. Petersburg, FL

9

9:00am – 2:00pm
Chronic Medical Conditions
St. Petersburg, FL

12

9:00am – 12:00pm
AIDS/HIV
St. Petersburg, FL

13

9:00am – 1:00pm
Medication Administration Train the
Trainer for RNs
St. Petersburg, FL

20

9:00am – 4:00pm
Providing Effective In Home Supports
St. Petersburg, FL

21

9:00am – 12:15pm
Phase II
New Provider Orientation, Personal
Outcome Measures
St. Petersburg, FL

22

9:00am – 12:00pm
Phase III
New Provider Orientation
St. Petersburg, FL

22

1:30pm 4:00pm
Phase IV
New Provider Orientation
St. Petersburg, FL

23

9:00am – 4:00pm
Generalization and Maintenance, Fact
or Fiction
St. Petersburg, FL

27

9:00am – 12:00pm
ABC Training for Waiver Support
Coordinators
St. Petersburg, FL

***Pre-Registration is Required for All Classes**

References: <http://apd.myflorida.com/> * <http://www.floridacapitalnews.com> * <http://www.wisdomquotes.com> * <http://www.theledger.com> *
<http://www.floridahealthpartners.com> * www.flse.net/Entry/welcome.html * <http://www.self-reliance.org/index.html>