

May/June Issue  
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## From The Desk of Steve Rosedale...

The war is over but the war for the peace has only just begun. We have mixed feelings of grief for those soldiers who lost their lives and pride for the way an American soldier conducts himself under the most difficult circumstances and achieves our goals as a country. We strive to do the same things at CommuniCare. We wage a constant battle against external forces, i.e. Medicare, Medicaid, the Governor, not enough staff, surveys, etc. It's not a piece of cake internally either, with the stresses you face daily to give good care and make a profit. Yet you do it, and do it well. ***You are professional, aggressive, enterprising, creative and good at heart. You are CommuniCare soldiers and we salute you!***

### Letter to the Editor

*By Karl Weninger, Regional Director of Operations*

The Cleveland Plain Dealer published this Letter to the Editor that was submitted for their April 6, 2003 publication.

The Plain Dealer's two-part series on "The Cost of Caring" brings important focus to Governor Taft's proposal to freeze Medicaid reimbursement to nursing homes as a way to help balance the state budget. While the series is informative in several respects, there are fallacies that must be addressed.

The governor's proposed budget does in fact put the frail and the elderly who require long-term care at risk. 75% of a nursing home's costs are labor, predominantly nursing care provided by licensed staff and nurse assistants. Freezing rates would necessitate slashing costs and the impact would be most felt in staffing. This ironically comes at a time when the state has mandated minimum staffing ratios. Residents entrusted to our care are caught in the middle. They deserve better than to be the victims of budget cuts.

Our state's Passport program serves an important purpose. Seniors should be able to stay in the community as long as possible and these services help to facilitate that noble goal. Residents in our nursing homes, however, cannot receive the care that they need elsewhere. We see higher acuity in long-term care with each passing year as hospitals discharge these individuals sooner than ever before. Those who claim that dollars would be better spent on less costly alternatives have not been in our nursing homes recently and are proposing simplistic solutions.

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# Focus On...

*“You Can Do Anything You Want, If You Want To Bad Enough”*

*By Kena Minnick, Executive Vice President and COO*

This simple statement is my personal mantra. It has ruled me all of my life and guides me today in my personal and professional life. Will Minnick, my 74 year old father, told me, “Kena, you can do anything you want, if you want to bad enough.” I was a little girl when I first heard him say this and I have heard it many times throughout my life. The really powerful part of this is that I believed him and...it is true.

It was true when I wanted to go to College, but had no money. So, I joined the Army and went on the GI Bill. It was again true when I wanted a Master’s Degree in Business. As a single, working mother, I went to school at night. It was true when I found myself in a physically abusive marriage and wanted freedom and safe harbor, but had no resources to extricate myself from the situation. Jobless, I summoned the courage to leave and slept on the floor. True again, when I lost my children to the power of money, but got them back after eight years of hard work and patience. True, when I wanted to be the head of operations and the Rosedales and Wilheims gave me a chance. TRUE.

“You can do anything you want, if you want to bad enough” I believe this so strongly that I cannot hear excuses. I cannot hear that something is not possible. I cannot hear that we cannot increase our census. I cannot hear the collective “NO” that has its root in negativity. If we succumb to self defeating messages, they will become self fulfilling prophecies. TRUE.

Yes we can! Yes we can! Yes we can!

I ask you to focus on the brightness of positive thinking and you will get whatever you want in life. As a graduate of the school of hard knocks, I know that all things are possible as long as we have faith in ourselves, the tenacity to pursue the desired goal and the willingness to make the sacrifices necessary to get there.

## Letter to the Editor (cont.)

The statement by Barbara Edwards, deputy director of the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, that nursing homes do not have to re-examine costs like hospitals is preposterous. She has apparently not noticed the ongoing expansion at any number of hospitals these days. As one who works closely with nursing home administrators on a daily basis, cost controls are an inherent part of our operations as we deal with declining Medicare reimbursement and skyrocketing workers’ compensation as well as liability insurance costs. Much needed capital projects have been put on hold as we allocate resources to our residents and staff.

There is no question that our Medicaid system is in need of new funding alternatives. The governor would do better to look in that direction rather than place the burden of his proposed budget on the backs of those who need our care the most in their final years. If a society is judged by the way that it takes care of its most disadvantaged, we have here an opportunity to do the right thing. Those entrusted to our care in nursing homes today deserve no less.

## Calendar of Events

### MAY

6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> – National Nurses Day and Week

[www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org)

11<sup>th</sup> – Mother’s Day

11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> - National Nursing Home Week [www.ahca.org](http://www.ahca.org)

17<sup>th</sup> – Armed Forces Day

26<sup>th</sup> – Memorial Day

28<sup>th</sup> – National Senior Health and Fitness Day

[www.fitnessday.com](http://www.fitnessday.com)

*Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month* [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)

*National Stroke Awareness Month* [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)

*National Arthritis Month* [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

*Better Hearing and Speech Month* [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

*National High Blood Pressure Education Month* [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

*National Mental Health Month* [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

*National Osteoporosis Prevention Month* [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)

*National Physical Fitness and Sports Month* [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)

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## Calendar of Events

### JUNE

#### 1<sup>st</sup> - Cancer Survivor Day

To honor the millions of cancer survivors and the memory of those who fought hard but lost the battle.

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

#### 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> – Nursing Assistants’ Day and Week

[www.can-network.org](http://www.can-network.org)

#### 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> – National Men’s Health Week

To promote the benefits of preventative healthcare among men [www.nmhw.org](http://www.nmhw.org)

#### 14<sup>th</sup> - Flag Day

#### 15<sup>th</sup> – Father’s Day

#### 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> - Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

[www.helenkeller.org](http://www.helenkeller.org)

#### National Safety Month

[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

## Benefit Spotlight

### *Wisdom to Work By...*

*By Joe LoPiccolo, Executive Director of Human Resources*

*“In all affairs it’s a healthy thing now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted.”—Bertrand Russell*

I thought I would share some wisdom from an article I read recently titled “The Answer to Effective Leadership is the Question” by Tom Laughlin.

“Every leader has a story that begins with, “told them to...” and ends with disaster. Misunderstandings, bad assumptions and general lack of communication contribute to more lost opportunities and wasted resources than any other leadership challenge. Let’s look at how provocative questions and profound listening can lead the way.

Questions help you stay in tune with the operational flow. You don’t need to remember all the

details. Just listen and intervene when necessary. Questions are more effective than direction. How many times has someone followed your instructions to the letter with poor results? They didn’t give you enough information about the situation, didn’t completely understand your instructions or simply didn’t have the ability to implement your idea. If you ask your staff for ideas they will incorporate all the information they have, understand how to implement the idea, and probably have the skills to execute it. They will also feel a sense of ownership for the outcome.

People become trapped in the organization’s accumulated knowledge and established procedures. I know a manager who questioned a policy that cost his department valuable time and resources. The policy was in place to protect the company if a vendor became insolvent. In this case, the vendor was the U.S. Postal Service. The company made an exception.

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## Share Corner

### *More News From Aristocrat Berea*

*By Ken Loeding*

On May 18th, the ICF/MR Unit will be awarded a check for \$3000.00 from the Junior Child Care Association at a sponsored brunch in Beechwood. Each year this group spends time fundraising to assist organizations in affording challenged children opportunities that will enhance their quality of life. Fortunately, we have been a recipient for the past 8 years and continue to be chosen based on our mission statement and purpose. This year's money has been donated with the intent of providing camping scholarships to our residents who can participate at Camp Cheerful.

The Junior Child Care Association is a wonderful group of women who spend each year fund-raising, meeting members of the community and doing whatever they can to afford challenged infants, children and young adults, opportunities that might otherwise not be there for them. Our relationship with the association has always been very positive and we're very grateful that they remember us each year.

## HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS

To ask good questions you must learn to listen, really listen. Here are some tips on how to listen effectively:

- Wait for a complete answer when you ask a question. Don't interrupt.
- Be patient. Questions can take people by surprise so allow some time for an answer to emerge. Suggest that people get back to you later if you think they need time to develop an informed answer.
- Keep your mind clear. You can't listen and think of the next thing that you want to say at the same time. If necessary, write down your questions and comments while you listen.
- Repeat back what you heard to verify your understanding.

If you ask questions in a curious manner rather than a demanding one you will put people at ease. Plus, people will gain clarity over their own thoughts and intentions as they answer.

Your best source of questions is intuition but you'll need a little practice and some courage to ask in this manner. Intuitive questions come from your unconscious mind, your gut, which can process much faster and consider a lot more information than your conscious mind. You'll need practice to turn those "feelings" into questions. In addition, intuitive questions many times don't, at first, seem to make any sense. That's where the courage comes in. If you are at a loss for a good question just ask why...5 times. Here's an illustration: Business is bad. Why? Revenue is down from last year. Why? Unit sales are down from last year. Why? We had an unusually large order from a customer last year. Why? The salesman convinced them to take 3 months worth of inventory. Why?

There was a sales contest for a trip to Hawaii.

A sales contest looks like a viable remedy after the second question. It doesn't look so good after the fifth. In fact, maybe no remedy is necessary. A thorough understanding of the situation may be enough.

To ask provocative questions and listen profoundly takes practice, discipline and patience. **Limit yourself to questions when someone walks in your office and then listen, REALLY LISTEN. The results might surprise you.**

## Benefit Spotlight

(Cont.)

### Flexible Spending Accounts Under Cafeteria Plans

By Rachel Stevens, Corporate Benefits Manager

Did you know CHS offers regular, full-time employees a benefit called a Flexible Spending Account, or FSA? Although the benefits of an FSA are significant, relatively few of our eligible employees utilize this exciting plan. Under a FSA, a pre-determined dollar amount is set aside from each paycheck, pre-tax, into one or both of the following spending accounts:

#### Medical Reimbursement Account

– to cover medical expenses, including dental and vision expenses, that are not covered by your insurance. There is NO maximum on the amount of money you can set aside for a medical account. Examples of these expenses are:

- Deductibles
- Co-payments
- Braces
- Lasik Eye Surgery
- Glasses, Contacts, Eye Exams
- Hearing Aids
- Health Care Equipment (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.)

- Prescription Drugs

#### Dependent Daycare

**Reimbursement Account** – to cover to cost of daycare for a dependent under the age of 13 who qualifies as a tax dependent, or anyone you claim as a tax dependent because of physical or mental inability to care for him/herself. The maximum that can be set aside for this type of account is \$5000 per year.

**“So what are the benefits of utilizing a FSA?”** The total amount you decide to set aside for expenses will be evenly deducted from your paychecks over the year. The best part is that the TOTAL amount you elect is available for your reimbursement needs January 1. For example, you have set aside \$4000 for the calendar year because you know you need braces. On February 10th, you get the braces for a total bill of \$4000. You can either immediately bring the bill to work and submit it for payment of the claim, or if you have already paid out of pocket for the braces, simply submit the receipt and you will be reimbursed for that expense. Either way, you win! You get the rest of the year to “pay” for the braces as the FSA deduction is coming out of your paycheck.

You also get another benefit by utilizing a FSA...TAX SAVINGS! What is meant by pre-tax benefits in an FSA? The deduction will come out of your paycheck before payroll taxes, resulting in LOWER taxes, and in many cases, more take home pay.

Your Human Resource Manager can provide you with a planning worksheet to help you figure out how much to set aside next year. Then, during Open Enrollment this December, you can sign up for your 2004 Flexible Spending Account. **I urge you to seriously consider this tax saving, exciting benefit!**