



WASHINGTON STATE NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2013
AFFORDABLE CARE ACT EDITION

**SSWLHC ADVOCACY,
PRIORITIES, ISSUES &
ACTIVITIES**

•SSWLHC WA CHAPTER

October 23, 2013 8:00—Noon
**'ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:
Implications for Social Work
Practice'**
New Holly Gathering Center
7054—32nd Ave. S., Seattle.

• CITY OF HOPE/EXCEL

April 21-22, Philadelphia PA
May 26-27 Baltimore, MD
**'EXCEL in Social Work:
Excellence in Cancer Education &
Leadership' FREE**
www.cityofhope.org/ExCEL

•NASW WA CHAPTER

**'CLINICAL ISSUES WORKING WITH
OLDER ADULTS'**
NOVEMBER 4, 2013
ST. MARTIN'S UNIVERSITY
5000 ABBEY WAY SE
LACEY WA

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AFFORDABLE CARE ACT OPENS FOR ENROLLMENT OCTOBER 1, 2013

By Amber Wade, MSW

The Washington Health Exchange Opens for enrollment on Tuesday October 1! The uninsured can now begin to research and choose a plan that is right for them. These plans will go into effect on January 1, 2014. There are 8 carriers, 38 plans, and 5 pediatric plans to choose from. Families, children, pregnant women, adults between the ages of 19 and 65 and people not entitled to Medicare could receive free or reduced-cost coverage. They must be U.S. citizens or meet the five-year legal resident requirement.

The website accommodates Spanish speakers. For other languages there will be toll free interpreter services available. Applications and customer information is available in Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Call the health exchange customer service line for more information: 1-800-WAFINDER.

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SSWLHC LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE: STATE POLITICS/LEADERSHIP AND HEALTH CARE ISSUES



Cassie Sauer, MSW

Mark your calendar for the **Annual Legislative Update: Implications for Social Work Practice**, sponsored by the Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care to be held on Wednesday, Oct 23, from 8 to noon, at the New Holly Gathering Center, 7054 - 32nd Ave S, Seattle, WA 98118. Featured speakers are Cassie Sauer, MSW, and Mary Kay Clunies-Ross, MS, from the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA).

The session will provide the context of state government politics and leadership and describe the health care issues at stake in the next legislative session. Impact on providers, hospitals and other organizations providing care, as well as consumers will be addressed.

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**Mary Kay
Clunies-Ross, MS**

ACA ENROLLMENT OPENS OCTOBER 1, 2013

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Go to <http://www.wahealthplanfinder.org/> with basic information about the person for whom you are shopping for insurance. What is their social security number, diagnosis, commonly used medications? When applying here, if the website determines that they are Medicaid eligible it will transfer them to the www.washingtonconnection.org where they can also apply for food stamps, cash assistance etc in addition to applying for Medicaid.

Private plans are divided into Gold, Silver, Bronze plans. Gold pays 80% (with a 20% out of pocket), Silver 70%, and Bronze 60% each corresponding to a lower premium per month. Patients who know they will have ongoing medical appointments should strive to have Gold plans whenever possible as it will save them a lot of money over the course of the year despite a slightly higher monthly premium.

To qualify for Medicaid, the new cut off is \$15,856/yr for a single adult and \$32,500 for a family of four. Earning less than \$90,000/yr for a family of four will qualify for a tax credit to assist with the cost of buying an insurance plan through the health exchange. If you qualify for a subsidy you must use the www.wahealthplanfinder.org to purchase insurance. If you don't qualify for a subsidy you can purchase insurance directly from an insurance company or you can purchase it through the health exchange.

Still confused? You can take a free Health Reform 101 class at the Swedish Institute put on by King County Public Health on Friday October 18, 3-5pm or Friday November 8, noon-2pm. Conference rooms A&B, A floor west, Swedish First Hill, 1221 Madison Street. Register by calling 206-386-2502.

MEDICARE open enrollment is Oct 15 to Dec 7th.

For patients 65 or older who have never enrolled in Medicare or who are currently enrolled and want to change plans or add supplemental or

WASHINGTON INSURANCE COMMISSIONER APPROVES 8 INSURANCE CARRIERS

The Washington Healthplan Finder supports eight insurance carriers offering a total of 46 plans and several dental plans. These eight insurance carriers and their plans have been approved by the Washington Insurance Commissioner and certified by the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. Not all plans offer insurance in all WA Counties.

The carriers include:

Bridgespan Health— a subsidiary of Cambia Health Systems which is also the parent company of Regence Blue Shield of WA. The company's home offices are in Portland, OR, and they are offering individual plans on state exchanges in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Utah.

Community Healthplan of Washington—This is a 'not for profit' network of community and migrant health centers in Washington, founded in 1992. Home offices are in Seattle, WA. Currently, they are providing coverage for 300,000 people enrolled in Medicaid, Basic Health, Washington Health Program and Medicare Advantage plans.

Coordinated Care—a subsidiary of Centene, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Centene provides mainly Medicaid managed care coverage to more than 2.6 million people in 19 states. They were authorized to provide services in WA State

Medicare Enrollment Begins 10/15/2013

prescription coverage, they must do so within Medicare open enrollment. Encourage patients to go to www.Medicare.gov and shop plans side by side (similar to the new health exchange) and same advice goes for Medicare: a lower monthly premium is not better than a higher out of pocket cost. If patients do not have access to the website, encourage them to attend a Medicare class at a local Senior Center.

Amber.Wade@Multicare.org.

WA Approves 8 Insurance Companies

in 2012 and currently cover 75,000 state residents in all 39 counties.

Group Health Cooperative—a ‘not for profit’ health care system, founded in 1947 and headquartered in Seattle, provides services to more than 600,000 Washington state residents.

Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest—Part of Kaiser Permanente Northwest, the plan currently covers about 125,000 members in Southwest Washington and 365,000 in Oregon. Headquartered in Portland, this plan will be available only in Clark and Cowlitz counties.

Lifewise Health Plan of Washington—This company was founded in 2002 as a ‘not for profit’, privately held subsidiary of Premera Blue Cross. They are headquartered in Mountlake Terrace and cover 100,000 people in Washington. This is the only insurer approved to sell in all 39 Washington counties.

Molina Healthcare of Washington—This plan is a for profit subsidiary of Molina Healthcare, based in Long Beach, CA. Headquarters for the subsidiary are based in Bothell, WA. The plan currently covers 413,000 Washington residents who are enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare.

Premera Blue Cross—a ‘not for profit’ independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, headquartered in Mountlake Terrace, WA. The currently provide health benefits and services to more than 1.5 million people in Washington and about 100,000 in Alaska.

Excerpted from The Seattle Times ‘Insuring Health’, Sept. 22, 2013, by Amy Snow Landa

Legislative Session Oct. 23

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Social Workers will learn about opportunities for leadership in educating consumers about options.

Cassie Sauer, MSW, is Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Government Affairs for WSHA. In that role, she manages and implements WSHA’s policy and advocacy for state/federal government affairs. Cassie has been a featured speaker for many years at our legislative workshops, and returns again to describe the context of state government politics and leadership.

She will also describe the health care issues at stake in the upcoming legislative session, including once-in-a-generation opportunities for forward movement on health care coverage.

Mary Kay Clunies-Ross, MS, Vice President of Communications & Public Affairs, WSHA, is responsible for setting strategy for and implementing WSHA’s communication to its members, with an emphasis on issues related to public policy advocacy, providing strategic oversight regarding messaging to members and the public, and maintaining and improving the public image of WSHA and its member hospitals.

Mary Kay returns to Seattle from Berkeley CA where she spent five years as a public information officer for City Departments, including public and mental health. Prior to working in Berkeley, she worked for Mayor Greg Nickels as the senior writer in his communication office and on multiple other projects and campaigns, including ‘Cover the Uninsured Week’. Mary Kay has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Seattle University and MS in Journalism from Northwestern University.

The conference will provide 3 CEUs to those individuals requesting the credits.

Register online at:

www.sswlhc-wa.org “Upcoming Events”

Conference contact: Carol Charles, 206-598-2018

Spotlight on:



NEST BUILDING IN MY OWN BACKYARD

By Debbie Anderson, MSW

As social workers we look first for the strengths of an individual. Community building at its best also builds off of the community assets while responding to needs. In the Fall of 2008 I found that I had a rare opportunity to work with my own community and realize a dream of starting a “virtual village” in North East Seattle. I had resigned my job of 23 years as the Director of Senior Care at Overlake Hospital and with a part time consulting job to sustain me, I decided it was now or never to bring a “village” to NE Seattle.

After many years as a champion and creator of community based programs for seniors on the Eastside, the Snoqualmie Valley and overseas, I relished the opportunity to apply my years of experience in social work and aging to my own neck of the woods. I was eager to start working in my own vibrant and livable community to make it more elder friendly and a place in which I would like to grow older. As you will see, social workers have played a key role in the development of NEST and the village movement in general.

THE VILLAGE MOVEMENT

The first village was started in 2001 in Beacon Hill, Massachusetts by a group of public spirited, mostly elderly residents of the mixed income, mid 19th century historic district of Boston. The founding team spent three years prior to launch, researching ideas and raising funds. They were dedicated to living life to the fullest in their own homes, in the community they loved. The model they pioneered has since grown to over 100 villages across the country with 125 communities in the process of developing villages. There is also a very informative and dynamic umbrella organization called the Village to Village Network that promotes technical assistance, member to member sharing and helps local communities find local solutions to building a village.

AN IDEA BECOMES AN ORGANIZATION

In late fall 2008 and into the winter of 2009 I began by setting up speaking events at our local Northeast Public Library and posting flyers at hundreds of locations inviting my neighbors to join me in starting a village. I also sent articles to many local papers, senior and community newsletters. I reached out to a wide variety of community groups such as community councils, local churches and senior organizations. Slowly people began to volunteer to help and lend their expertise such as creating a web site, or forming an out-reach community or doing a needs assessment and researching our local populations statistics. It was very energizing and fulfilling to get to know persons in my neighborhood better and to work with many talented volunteers. Our first major donation of \$5,000 dollars was given by a mother with young children who lived in Laurelhurst, and had always focused on donating to programs for women and children and yet wanted to support having her own children grow older in a neighborhood that was vital and dynamic for persons of all ages. She read about the desire to start a village in the Laurelhurst community newsletter.

With volunteers that came forward from the community meetings we formed a Steering Committee and started the business side of becoming an official organization. In the Spring of 2009 we choose a name-**North East Seattle Together** (NEST), and decided that the **Mission** of NEST was “To connect northeast Seattle residents to community resources; and provide social and educational opportunities so that, as they age, members can live confidently in their homes and neighborhoods.”

GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

We decided to include the 14 neighborhoods of Bryant, Hawthorne Hills, Maple Leaf, Matthews Beach, Meadowbrook, Ravenna, Roosevelt, Sandpoint, University District, View Ridge, Wedgwood and Windemere.

We also decided that there were no age restrictions on membership in NEST. While our programming focus would be for persons over 50, all ages could join.

We also decided that the core services offered by NEST would include:

- NEST will be a “volunteer first” organization encouraging volunteerism among members as well as by persons of all ages wanting to be of help.
- NEST will have one phone number to call for access to a wide range of vetted professional services as well as preferred home care providers.
- NEST will offer professional guidance on resources, including other professionals appropriate to assist with challenging decisions that can arise when members age in their communities.
- NEST volunteers will assist with a variety of in-home needs, errands, light housekeeping, computer help, local transportation, gardening help and medical advocacy and guidance.
- NEST will facilitate volunteer-organized social and educational events such as potlucks, informative talks and visits to local restaurants, including a monthly calendar of events and a newsletter.

We set the annual cost for a membership in NEST at \$600 per person and \$900 per household.

With donated help we launched a website, logo and marketing materials, incorporated as a organization, received our first \$5,000 donation, recruited a Board, adopted by-laws, elected officers and developed a three year budget. We also applied for pro bono legal assistance from Perkins-Coie .With their assistance in early July 2009 we applied for 501 C3 status and by late September 2009 we received it. The good news was we could now fund raise in earnest as it was tax deductible. Our Board, Board committee and volunteers, continued to reach out to the community to build our mailing list and potential member base. We applied for grants, asked for donations and held a very successful and special fundraising event featuring Nancy Pearl in the Fall of 2010.

By the spring of 2011 we decided to invest the \$90,000 we had raised over the last three years and hire a paid Director to launch NEST. By November 2011 we had recruited and hired a sensibly risk-relishing Director who was willing to lend her many talents and creativity in community building to make NEST real.

LAUNCHING NEST

Judy Kinney MSW, joined us as our Director in November 2011 and prepared us to start selling NEST memberships in February 2012. We called these members “Founding Members” and they helped us to beta test what we would be offering to Nest members when we sold regular memberships in May 2012. The 23 Founding members were mostly long time supporters of NEST who were committed to the vision and had enthusiasm for the village concept.

We already had some donated office furniture and one of our Board members, who is very involved with a local church, offered us office space for a modest price. Judy also actively recruited BSW students from the University of Washington and an Ameri-Corps volunteer to assist in the office and help with many aspects of NEST development. With only one paid staff person we could not have been able to do all that we did without the creativity and hard work of these special interns, During the pre launch phase, we developed a long list of neighbors who had offered to volunteer so one of the first activities of the new Director was to provide orientation to NEST for the volunteers and develop a set

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Membership Matters

LOCAL MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Welcome to all of you who have newly joined the SSWLHC WA Chapter or renewed your membership. The Board values your participation and invites you to participate in a committee that is of interest to you and your colleagues. At this point in time, the WA Chapter has 79 paid members, 38 more need to renew.

As you may know, the WA Chapter is officially independent of the National organization. However, we retain the name and a closely shared history with the National organization of SSWLHC. The WA Chapter has produced four of the National presidents in the past 20 years, two of whom remain in the Seattle area.

As an independent organization, we manage our own dues structure and finances, and social workers may join the local organization without having to pay the National dues (as with NASW). Many of us continue to support the National organization which supplies us with National policy information, a National list serve and continuing education opportunities.

As your local organization, we will continue to offer CEUs at an affordable cost to you, a social work student scholarship, and opportunities for information sharing on current issues. We also provide a list-serve, Facebook page, and website.

Please renew your membership today if not paid up. Invite your colleagues to join. Dues can be paid on-line at www.signmeup.com/84402.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

The Ed Committee plans CE sessions and the annual Vendor Fair. We need help in planning sessions, finding venues, registration, creating brochures, and more.

Contact Carol Charles at: Carol6@uw.edu

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE PRESENTATIONS?

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

We are seeking proposals for presentations for future Continuing Education sessions.

The local chapter strives to provide low cost, relevant CE offerings. A major talent pool is within our own membership.

If you have presented regionally or nationally, and are willing to share your topic with our membership, we'd like to hear from you.

If you have expertise or experience in a current issue of interest to health care social workers, and would like to develop a presentation, please contact me.

Carol Charles, Education Chair

Carolc6@uw.edu

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA)

ARE WE CONFUSED YET?

There has been much information coming out about the ACA from a variety of sources, some more reliable than others, all with their own spin and agenda. Then we factor in Washington State's way of operationalizing ACA and it's no wonder we are all confused about all this change. We have compiled some resources and links in an effort to ease the confusion.

As part of my position at Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW) I am tasked with translating the requirements of the ACA into the practice of CHPW's contracted clinics and providers. Not an easy task or one I do on my own. I'm part of an amazing team of people who believe we are working towards a better way of delivering health care to EVERYONE. What I hope to share are some resources for additional information as close to the source as possible.

There are a few things I know for sure, one of which is that the changes to Medicaid are well underway and will continue for the next 9 – 12 months if not longer. The latest big change to Medicaid in Washington State is the implementation of Health Homes for recipients who have multiple chronic medical conditions and high cost. A Health Home is not a place, it is a set of services designed to bridge providers and whole person care. At the center of Health Home services is a Care Coordinator, whose primary role is to assist the recipient in coordinating services being provided by multiple providers. An example would be a 45 year old recipient diagnosed with congestive heart failure, diabetes, and depression with a history of substance abuse. The Care Coordinator would work to identify the recipients goals related to their health. Goals could be "I want to feel better" or "I want to go to my family reunion next year". It is up to the Care Coordinator to establish short term goals and action steps related to achieving the goal of the patient. This is to be accomplished using motivational interviewing, behavioral activation, and home visits. Sounds like social work to me!

Clearly this is a very simplified version of Health Homes, with much more available on the Health Care Authority webpage (http://www.hca.wa.gov/Pages/health_homes.aspx). This is also an excellent resource for much more information and additional links to resources about Medicaid Expansion, which is another aspect of the ACA. Expansion will open Medicaid health benefits to an estimated 300,000 people over the next few years, by basing eligibility on income only. Single individuals who earn up to 138% of the federal poverty level, which is about \$15,856 annually, would now qualify for Medicaid. Once enrolled on Medicaid these recipients could potentially receive Health Home services if they qualify based on the criteria stated above.



Stacy Heinle, MSW,
SSWLHC Board President

The part of the ACA we have probably heard the most about when listening to media reports is the establishment of a Health Care Exchange, which is separate from any of the changes related to Medicaid. The Health Care Exchange is most closely related to commercial health insurance coverage. If you are a single person making \$20,000 annually you would be able to purchase low cost insurance from a variety of insurance carriers, offering a variety of benefit packages, at varying cost to the recipient. The best place to get information is at Washington Health Benefit Exchange (<http://www.wahbexchange.org/>). There you will find layers and layers of information. The most important thing to know is enrollment starts on October 1, 2013 and coverage begins January 1, 2014.

The SSWLHC will be posting additional information and links, doing our best to help keep social workers informed and able to provide the best care possible. If you have any questions feel free to send an e-mail sjheinle@gmail.com.

NORTH EAST SEATTLE TOGETHER

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of policies and procedures. Forms and protocols were developed for dealing with members requests for volunteers and the preferred vendor list was greatly expanded. Judy also revamped our somewhat now outdated website and developed a new logo that perfectly captured the spirit of NEST.

Judy with the assistance of several Board members also launched a Business partnership campaign and we had four local businesses join us- Key Bank, Home Street Bank, Pacific Medical, and Kattermans Pharmacy.

In March of 2013 we organized a 2nd popular fund raising event that again featured Nancy Pearl (a NE Seattle resident and supporter of NEST), and NE Seattle Junior High jazz band.

The Board has also been challenged to transition from a Founding Board to a Governing Board as we have searched for new roles and ways to operate more effectively. As our Annual budget is a little under \$110,000 and our memberships fees draw in less than \$42,000, we are also committed to on going fundraising.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Summer 2013, we adopted a new more inclusive vision and mission statement and also a new level of NEST membership called NEST Builder. This membership is \$300 per year for an individual and \$450 for a two-person household and offers access to our social and educational offerings only.

Our **VISION** statement now reads: North East Seattle Together builds a sustainable, intergenerational community that supports neighbors in growing older together with confidence, joy and peace of mind.

Our new **MISSION** statement reads:

NEST (North East Seattle Together) is a grassroots community bringing together individuals, families, seniors, students, business owners and community organizations, and dedicated to ensuring that as we grow older, we can continue to live safely and confidently in our own homes, in the neighborhoods we love.

We have 65 members and are growing slowly and organically month by month. We have monthly pot lucks and cultural and social events as well as an active list of volunteers that provide a wide range of functions

each month and a preferred list of vendors. We are planning a NEST Dine Out with friends event for Thursday Oct. 24th at local restaurants in NE Seattle.

We are always looking for new Board members, volunteers and members. You can learn more about us at our website www.nestseattle.org, speak with our Director or e mail me at anderson.deborah8@gmail.com.

MORE VILLAGES IN SEATTLE'S FUTURE?

Village building is an exciting innovation in the world of aging and community and uses many of the talents and expertise that social workers are known for – starting with the strengths of the individual and the assets of the community and growing outward with concentric and connected circles . One other village started about the the same time as NEST out of the Phinney Neighborhood Center. It is called PNA Village and can be reached at phinneycenter.org/village. We often share ideas and experiences with their staff.

Seattle is rich in neighborhoods and there are many more opportunities for village development in Seattle as well as King County. Each village reflects the uniqueness of its community and to thrive will grow upward out of that community. Perhaps one of you reading this article will decide that **now is the time** for you to start working with your community to start a village. While it is not a quick fix, but a rather slow and organic building process, the journey itself can be a deeply rewarding investment in making your own neighborhood a special place to grow old. Hopefully one day we will have a network of villages that can band together to gain efficiencies in administrative overhead and yet allow each village to remain true to its local nature and connections.

Debbie Anderson is available at anderson.deborah8@gmail.com



A NEST Volunteer helps a NEST member with computer issues.