



February 16, 2010

Dear Providers:

Recently the Seattle Times newspaper published a series of articles on Adult Family Homes. (You can find the articles at http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/seniorsforsale/2010963980_seniors03.html.) From what we understand, there may be more follow-up articles in the future. The series of articles were not favorable to our industry. They depicted some serious and heart-wrenching cases of abuse by Adult Family Home (AFH) providers. The stories were awful, horrific and unacceptable practices of certain providers. WSRCC takes these issues seriously. However, the AFHs portrayed in these newspaper articles are not reflective of the entire AFH community. The majority of the homes do a good job and hold themselves to high standards of quality care. AFHs offer positive solutions for the care of fragile adults and they are a vital component of Home and Community based settings.

WSRCC understands the concerns and fears that you may have as a result of the articles. How do these articles affect the future of AFHs and our image? What are we doing to address these issues? We want you to know that WSRCC is doing their part to be proactive and responsive to these issues. We plan to work collaboratively with the State of Washington to ensure protection for residents of AFHs, while we also support quality inspections of AFHs. And we continue to expand our provider education endeavors. Below is a list of actions we have already accomplished in response to these articles and we continue to do more for Adult Family Homes:

- WSRCC immediately engaged in conversation with the Governor's Office, the Secretary of Department of Social and Health Services, the Assistant Secretary of Aging and Disability Services, as well as the WA Association of Realtors. We will also be meeting with the State Long Term Care Ombudsman to discuss how these problems will be addressed in the future and how we can work together to protect the residents in AFHs.
- WSRCC has formed a stakeholder group with DSHS for rule-making, for instance the WAC's.
- WSRCC is talking with a public relations firm to help improve and create a positive image of AFHs.
- WSRCC is hosting a series of educational courses (for more details go to www.wsrcc.org):
 - ✓ WAC training classes will be offered beginning in March throughout the State of Washington;
 - ✓ AFH Business Conference will be held in May in Spokane;
 - ✓ 14th Annual educational conference in October in Tacoma;
 - ✓ Caregiving trainings specifically geared for your staff;
 - ✓ Geriatric Specialty Certification through the University of Washington's NW Geriatric School offers 52 on-line credit courses;
 - ✓ WSRCC is partnering with Highline Community College to offer business courses specific to AFHs.
- WSRCC has made improvements to our website (www.wsrcc.org) to include more corporate sponsors to offer more resources for providers to help them in their businesses.

- WSRCC's two (2) full-time lobbyists continue to advocate on our behalf with legislators.

Being an AFH provider is a privilege. With this calling, come the challenges and responsibilities of running an AFH. As we embark on an aging society, known as the "silver tsunami", consumers are becoming more educated and proactive in their care or loved ones' care. There is more demand to transform our AFH system to a more caring system. As an AFH professional, we encourage you to be prepared to accept these responsibilities and do your part to ensure our residents are protected and that they continue to live a meaningful quality of life. It is up to you to change our industry for the better and embrace improvements that may be necessary to your standard of care or business practices.

With this said, we want to remind everyone of your responsibility and duty to protect the vulnerable adults and seniors entrusted in your care. It is our responsibility to continue to get education and keep learning the skills as an AFH professional. We can always learn more and improve as this industry continues to grow and we become more regulated. You can "stay out of trouble" by educating yourself in this industry and prevent these kind of things from happening. Obtain a copy of your current WAC's, read and follow them. Learn, understand and know your WAC's. Maintain an open communication with your licensors by asking questions, clarifications or suggestions. Seek assistance from your chapters and WSRCC as there is a huge resource base and a wealth of knowledgeable experts who have been running adult family homes for years.

Make sure you do the things to keep yourself out of trouble. Be sure to honor resident rights, keep your assessments and care plans updated. Engage in dialogue with resident family members or their representative by keeping them informed of the resident's care, address their concerns and don't take clients that are over your scope of practice or care ability.

We encourage you to develop your skills with training, continue to get education, continue to be more knowledgeable, attend the educational trainings and your chapter meetings, and obtain your geriatric certification. WSRCC is dedicated to educate providers and become prepared to handle the on-going challenges and demands of running an AFH and our residents care needs.

As we move forward and face the issues ahead of us, continuing education is vitally important to your success. We ask you to join us in being positive and proactive, and engage in making a difference to our AFH community.

Thank you for your continual commitment and dedication for the care of your residents!

To your success and best wishes,

Tammy Stimach

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WSRCC Board Chair