

# Partners in Quality Care

- December 2010 -

*In-Home Aides Partners in Quality Care* is a monthly newsletter published for member agencies.

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What you will learn:

Importance of positive impressions

The responsibilities of the home care team to each other

The importance of standards and ethics

Your supervisors responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to your supervisor

Your responsibilities to your patient/client

## The Gift of You!



**“Influence gained is not by preaching but by what we are..... be heroic in your every day’s work!”**

**Florence Nightingale**

The National Association for Home and Hospice Care recently stated:

“The National Association for Home Care & Hospice and its affiliates join the home care industry in applauding its home care aides and their commitment to providing quality and compassionate care to the patients and families they serve. **The role of the home care aide is integral to providing care to elderly or disabled clients who need more extensive personal and home care than family or friends can provide.**

Maintaining a positive impression on those we care for and the public in general is very important. Your agency may have a standard of care and conduct required of its employees such as ensuring ongoing training to help you do your job or a certain dress code. In addition to following the standard yourself, you may need to role model that standard of care for new employees and other staff.

In this month’s newsletter, we will discuss the responsibilities that the home care team members have to one another and to their patients and we also will present a *Code of Ethics* for the In-Home Aide to use as a standard of conduct.

In the quote above, Florence Nightingale, who is widely recognized as the founder of nursing, is saying that actions speak louder than words. Let our caring, compassion and competent actions speak for us as we work together to keep patients home where they most desire to be.

Thousands upon thousands of aides do make a tremendous positive impact every day across our nation. **In-home aides are a great gift to our health care system.**

**It is our sincere wish that you and your family enjoy a safe and Happy Holiday season!**



## The In-Home Aide Care Team



### What are the supervisor's responsibilities to you as a team member?

- ✔ To provide clear instructions about how to care for your patient
- ✔ To provide regular feedback regarding your performance
- ✔ To make sure you understand how to do the work/tasks assigned and to coach you to success
- ✔ To listen and help with any work problems you may be having

Let your supervisor know immediately if you feel threatened in your work environment or if you are being sexually harassed, or if you are injured. You are an important member of the home care team and your safety is important to your employer!

### What are your responsibilities to your employer as a team member?

- ✔ To follow the agency's policies and procedures
- ✔ To follow the patient's care plan and alert your supervisor if the patient's needs change
- ✔ To document the care you provide
- ✔ To obey laws and regulations
- ✔ To work in a safe, competent manner
- ✔ To give and accept feedback
- ✔ To regularly attend work and to be on time
- ✔ To take advantage of opportunities to increase knowledge and skills

Be sure to always follow your agency's policies and procedures. Understand the patient's care plan. Always follow the care plan prepared by your supervisor as it will list your assigned tasks. Notify the nurse supervisor of any tasks you do not know how to do. Sometimes your patient may ask you to do a task not assigned to you by your supervisor. Let your patient know that you have to check with the supervisor first! This is very important in order to make sure the individual is getting only appropriate, assigned care. Be careful to always document your care as assigned. Surveyors will visit your agency to make sure the agency is following state and federal regulations. This review includes looking at your aide notes (flow sheet). If the aide notes and care plan do not match, then your agency can receive a deficiency because you did not document your care/tasks as assigned. In addition, payers of care can also look at your notes to make sure you are documenting and providing care as assigned. Never falsify time sheets or your documentation. If you are unable to deliver care as assigned or if your patient refuses care, let your supervisor know immediately. Also remember to sign and date your aide notes.

### **What are your responsibilities to your patient/client?**

- ✔ **To understand and be responsive to client needs**
- ✔ **To visit and provide competent care as assigned**
- ✔ **To follow the patient's Bill of Rights**
- ✔ **To notify the supervisor of changes in the client**
- ✔ **To treat the client and the client's property with respect**

**“Be heroic in your every day's work!”**



Let your supervisor know immediately if you are unable to provide care to your patient/client. Your employer needs time to make scheduling changes to ensure that the client gets the care they need. Clients have certain rights by law.

Always treat your clients with dignity and respect. Clients have a right to privacy and confidentiality. If you should terminate employment with an agency, do not share any previous client information with your new employer including the names of clients. This can be a federal violation of the client's privacy that can lead to serious outcomes for you. Do not accept money or gifts from any employer in any health care setting in exchange for patient names (referrals) when care is being paid with public dollars – such as Medicaid. This can be a violation of federal laws and can have serious consequences for you.

Never threaten a client or try to force them to try to do something. If you are having difficulty working with an individual, notify your supervisor. Notify your supervisor immediately if an individual says they are missing items in their home or if they have fallen or have other complaints about their care. Never take, use or borrow money from clients. Even if the client wants to give you money or other items, respectfully decline. Also, never take a client's medications – this is called diversion of patient drugs. These actions can have very serious consequences for you.

**Remember – you are a “gift” to the health care system and that is a wonderful image to have and keep!**



# THE IN-HOME AIDE CODE OF ETHICS © AHHC

*In-home aides play a vital role in serving our nation's chronically ill, disabled and aging populations. Often having the most contact with the patients, these individuals are usually "closer" to patients than any other home care discipline. Often referred to as the backbone of the long-term care system, they are uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of our aging and ailing populations.*

## **As an in-home aide, I solemnly pledge myself to the following code of ethics:**

The primary duty of the in-home aide is to assist in the care of patients; to ease suffering; to promote health; to do no harm; and, to encourage the quality of in-home aide care.

The in-home aide provides services with respect for human dignity no matter the nationality, race, creed, age, religion or status of patients and provides patient centered care.

The in-home aide adheres to the Patient Bill of Rights.

The in-home aide adheres to standards of personal conduct and obeys all laws of the state and country.

The in-home aide respects and holds in confidence all health care information obtained in the course of work.

The in-home aide maintains competence; is aware of personal learning needs; and, will pursue needed education by alerting the agency supervisor.

The in-home aide provides services in accordance with the patient's plan of care and reports appropriate patient findings to the supervisor, including ethical issues involving the patient.

The in-home aide refuses to participate in illegal/unethical actions and will expose such conduct of others through appropriate agency channels

The in-home aide assumes responsibility for his/her actions and upholds the laws that affect the home care agency including providing care and recording the care as necessary for agency regulations, quality improvement and payment.

The in-home aide works responsibly and in harmony with other members of the health care team being sensitive in all verbal, non-verbal and written communications with team members, patients and families.

The in-home aide demonstrates caring behavior and yet maintains appropriate boundaries.

The in-home aide supports, to the extent possible, patient/family independence and assists patients/families in reaching their full potential of self-care.

Aide Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_