

# community care

## news

HOLIDAY EDITION  
2009

### A Christmas Message from the GM

The months fly past and once again we are nearly at Christmas. This can be a time of year when we look back at the year that is nearly over – lets all make sure that we focus on the good times and the good things we have seen or experienced during the year; the people and things that make us happy.

Thank you for all your hard work over the year. It is a great time to be a part of Blue Cross and from all the staff in the office, we wish you and those close to you, all the very best for a happy and safe Christmas and holiday period. Enjoy!!!



### Holiday Leave / Extra Availability

You have already been asked to put in your leave intentions and applications, and thank you for doing this. It is critical that we know your availability over this period, as we need to continue to provide services to our clients. To keep our business – and to keep you in work with the hours you need – we need to provide a reliable and consistent service, and not cancel with the client because staff are not available.

So – we all need to work together to make sure we provide this high quality care. For you, this means it is critical that you give us as much notice as possible – **AT LEAST 4 WEEKS** – if you are looking for holiday leave. If you have not already notified the care coordination team of any leave that you plan to take, it is essential that you do so immediately.

If you are not going away and have some more time available to work over December and January, please also let the care coordination team know immediately, as we may be able to offer you additional work to help pay off those Christmas shopping bills !!





## Community Care Staff Issues



### The FISH! Philosophy® Network

A Global Community of FISH! Philosophers



As part of our continuous promotion of the *FISH! Philosophy*, several staff members have been recognised for their outstanding performance. Congratulations and well done to the following staff members:

- **Amanda Balchin** – “she is always helpful, polite and goes out of her way to assist us when she can, she treats her clients with dignity and communicates well with them....” from Case Manager Mary Gorman.
- **Cheryl Baulch** – “for going above and beyond and dropping everything to assist a client on more than one occasion.” from Care Coordinator Team Leader Sherryn McMeeken.
- **Vanessa Calchia** - “making the extra effort to do tasks which were not a part of her job” – from Care Coordinator Rhonda Bowen.
- **Janine Graf** - “making the extra effort to do tasks which were not a part of her job” – from Care Coordinator Rhonda Bowen.

### EBA

You have all been involved in the EBA, receiving information, letters, and the opportunity to attend information sessions and of course to vote.

The result of the voting for the EBA is as follows. 157 people voted and of those 145 or 92% voted yes, meaning that the EBA was very strongly supported by staff with a “yes” vote winning the day.

The EBA now goes to Fair Work Australia for approval, and we will let you know when they have approved it. It cant be implemented until then.

Thank you to all staff for such a high participation rate.

#### Thought of the Day

**“Enjoy Life, this is not a rehearsal”.**

### Blue Cross Uniform and name badge

We have noticed that some staff are wearing Premier Care or Horizon Care tops. If you have a Blue Cross top, you must wear that please. If you do not have a Blue Cross top, please contact the office. You can purchase additional tops for \$22 and this can be deducted from your pay, just contact the office for a form to be sent to you.

Some of our clients are also telling us that staff are not always wearing or carrying their Blue Cross photo ID name badge. Please make sure that you do so, as it is important for safety for our clients. If you do not have a Blue Cross photo ID name badge, please contact the office and organise for a badge to be made.



## Safety over summer

As summer approaches, it is important that consideration be given to health and safety during the hot weather, and where necessary, to bush fire risk. The most important thing is to be aware of the risks especially in regard to hot weather, and be ready to deal with the heat of those days.

If you are working over summer, you will need to take care of yourself and also look at clients to check that they are managing well in the heat. The best thing to do is prepare and act appropriately during hot weather. This can include the following:

- Keep an eye on the forecast, and plan ahead for hot days.
- Make sure you carry cold drinks with you and drink regularly.
- Talk to your doctor if you are on any medications, as some medications may need to be adjusted in the very hot weather.
- Reduce caffeine (tea and coffee, cola drinks) and alcohol
- Look at the colour of your urine; if it is dark then you need to drink more fluids
- Stay cool – wash your face with water, carry a face washer and towel or some wipes, with you in the car

Hot weather can cause discomfort, and for some people it can make them feel quite unwell. Signs of heat related illness can include hot and dry skin; paleness; rapid heart rate; muscle cramps, nausea and vomiting; feeling disorientated or confused.

If you experience these symptoms you should seek medical help immediately, and notify the office immediately if you are at work. If you see any signs of heat stress with clients, it is important that you assist them, and also call the office immediately.

If you live in a bushfire risk area, you should also plan ahead with your family or friends, to be sure that they can assist you if there is a need for evacuation. Remember to always follow the instructions given by emergency services people, for example police or fire brigade. If you would like any further information on bushfires or managing in the heat, there are lists of information on the CFA and DHS websites. Your case manager may also provide further information.

If heat or bushfire affects your availability over summer, please make sure you let the care coordination team know as soon as possible. Take care and make sure you plan ahead for those hot days.

## A Message from the Quality Manager

Please remember to report any issue of concern related to a client you visit immediately to the Care Coordination Team.

We need to be informed about these issues as soon as possible so we can protect the health and well-being of both our clients and you.

### Types of things we need to know about are:

- Bruising/scratches the client can't explain (may indicate they are falling)
- Resident falls
- Verbally aggressive behaviour by clients towards you (this includes swearing or threats)
- Physically aggressive behaviour by clients towards you
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour by clients towards you
- Theft or stolen articles
- ANY injury to you during the course of your duties

## Holiday Leave Requests

Head Office should now be in receipt of all holiday leave requests. If you have not sent yours in, **please do so immediately.**

This will assist us in sourcing carers to cover your shifts while you are away and to ensure your clients don't miss their service.

## **After Hours Emergency Respite Service – Are you interested?**

Blue Cross works with the Commonwealth Carer Respite Program (Southern Region) to support carers who need respite. Occasionally there is an emergency need for respite, for example if a carer becomes ill and needs to go to hospital, leaving behind their loved one who needs support / personal care.

We never know when the Program will call us, and therefore cannot guarantee an amount of work or when the call will come. So we want to build up a list of people who are interested and willing to be called. You will get very little notice of the shift (only as much as we do !!) as the service is an emergency response. The minimum call out is 1.5 hours, and the hourly rate is a little higher due to the short notice – the Care Coordinator will explain the rates to you when you are contacted. The work will be allocated to the people on the list; as fairly as possible.

Personal Carers working in the Southern Region who want to pick up some extra work, who are reliable, with a car and a mobile phone, are invited to “join the list” of carers to be called for this service.

IS THIS YOU??? If yes, please contact the Care Coordination Team. Be sure to advise if there are any set days/nights when you are not available to be called, and make sure that you update this if your circumstances change.

## **Possible Work Opportunity**

Blue Cross is looking into an exciting opportunity that could see an increase of Direct Care Work across the disability sector.

To do this, we would like to know which personal care staff would be interested in such an opportunity if it arises.

### **DO YOU HAVE OR ARE INTERESTED IN...**

- Certificate III or above?
- Training in disabilities?
- Demonstrated work experience in disabilities?
- Manual handling awareness? Hoist training?
- An understanding of the challenges facing a person with a disability?
- A First Aid I certificate?
- A working with children’s check?
- An interest in obtaining a working with children’s check?
- A genuine desire to assist people with disabilities?

### **WHAT TO DO NOW...**

If you would like to express interest in this possibility, please contact Jacqueline Rowe at Blue Cross Community Care on 9828 1240 or email [jacqueline@bluecross.com.au](mailto:jacqueline@bluecross.com.au)