



## THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Aloise Walker Graf

Holidays and holy days give pause for reflection. We are so very grateful for an incredible network of providers who work with care, concern, diligence, timeliness, knowledge and efficiency in providing home care, home infusion and hospice services to thousands of patients per year. Our providers are extremely reliable, dependable and collaborative. Thank you so much!

A few years ago this was my message to our NorthCoast family. I would like to share with you. During the holiday and year to come, may you be blessed with



Peace that calms



Love that abounds

Health that sustains

Friendships that grow

Prosperity not measured in dollars and cents

Joy that radiates



Comfort that touches your sorrow and loss

Happiness that abides in your being

And hope that nourishes and brings promise to your soul



## STREAMLINING PROCESSES



**HOSPICE PROVIDERS:** As you well know, many health plans have large deductibles, co-insurance and co-pay requirements. For those patients who have transitioned into the end stage of life, this is an especially sensitive reality and very understandably so. While the Reimbursement team recognizes how difficult this time is, it is their responsibility to arrange collection of the out-of-pocket expenses. In this endeavor, it is our desire to collaborate with our network providers as you are the ones working so closely with the patient and his/her family. Debby Barto (800-757-7111 ext. 2022) has taken on this delicate task and she may seek your assistance for the best approach to the patient's unique situation. We know that many of our network hospice organization utilize special funds to assist patient/family with these out of pocket expenses. Several hospices have notified NorthCoast that they have funding or special programs to assist patients as needed. Please advise us if your organization offers this service/assist.

**INFUSION PROVIDERS.** It is extremely important that providers inform NorthCoast when a patient is admitted to the hospital, whether the admission is planned or unplanned. When service is interrupted, the per diem reimbursement is affected. Once NorthCoast is advised, "authorizations" for service are adjusted for the time that the patient was absent from home. Providers are diligent in dispensing anticipated product and supply quantity; and health plans are diligent in allowing only units relative to actual home care days on service. To accurately bill, NorthCoast must be informed when such situations arise.

**PATIENTS WITHOUT HEALTH PLAN PRECERT REQUIREMENTS.** Effective mid-November, NorthCoast implemented a new set of guidelines for intake and case managing nurses to utilize for health plan members who do not have precertification requirements. A copy of the visit and process guidelines was sent to each home health organization. We believe we have created administrative efficiencies for both NorthCoast and your organization. This positive process change should in no way negatively impact the patients we mutually serve. It is essential that this information be shared with all staff. Please contact Aloise at 800-757-7111, ext. 2011, or email (awgraf@northcoastgroup.org) with any questions.

**Benefit Verification.** Total reverification of benefits is completed per benefit year. Most members have a benefit year that begins January. Please advise NorthCoast of any pending changes for which you become aware in order to prevent any non-coverage concerns. Please review the patient benefit verification form that your organization receives from NorthCoast at the start of care. Policy benefits are defined; visits limitations or financial limitations are noted. It is a shared responsibility to track those limitations so that no patient is placed at risk for non-payment of services received.

**Updates At End Of Plan Of Care Certification (62 days).** Your organization will receive a reminder of "Services Update Due" near the expiration date of the "authorization(s)" for services as is currently done.

- If updates are not received within 10 days of the expiration date, the patient is discharged from NorthCoast.
- NorthCoast requires a discharge summary for each patient. **For Advantage members, an NOMNC is also required.**

**Updates Prior To End Of Plan Of Care.** Notify NorthCoast of any change in patient status requiring new services and if the patient has a hospital admission/readmission.

**Appropriate Visit Utilization /Management.** It is an expectation that prudent, compliant and appropriate visit schedules are maintained and that overutilization of services does not occur as a result of extending the update period to 62 days.



**GENERAL INFORMATION:** Anthem BCBS will discontinue Medicare Advantage Fee For Service plans effective January 1, 2012. Anthem is working closely with CMS to ensure affected members receive information regarding plan cancellation and available coverage options.

**CLAIMS NOTES.** Timely filing limitations are real! Claims exceeding filing limits of the health plan cannot be processed.

**Electronic Claims Testing.** NorthCoast will beta test electronic claims early next year. Please ensure you have responded to the request for information sent on November 18. Contact Cathy Jones at 800-757-7111 ext. 2017 with any questions.

All claims filed after January 1, 2012 must be in the 5010 format.

# NETWORK NEWS



Farewell to our associates who are retiring:

- Brenda Lance, Director of Program Development
- Rosemary Greny, RN IV Case Manager
- Pat Hurd, LPN Intake Coordinator

Saying farewell to associates is not an easy task. NorthCoast is an extension of family so we share both joy and sadness for those moving on to the next phase of life. Retirement is well deserved for this three incredible ladies who have brought such strengths, talents and commitment to NorthCoast. Their daily presence will be sorely missed.

As we recognize those who are retiring, we would be remiss in not acknowledging our celebration of Sue Michaud's 30 years of employment in July. Sue lives and breathes quality management and we are grateful for her longstanding commitment to ensure quality for the patients we service as she works with internal and external associates.

### New Staff:

Welcome to our new staff: Lela Solomon, LPN Intake Coordinator  
 Robbie Juhasz, Benefits Specialist  
 Lisa Martin, Benefits Specialist

**Our Website Has a New Look!** Please check out our new website  
[www.NorthCoastgroup.org](http://www.NorthCoastgroup.org).



### TAMI FAIR BENEFITS SPECIALIST

**Education/degrees:** Current nursing major @ Tri-C

**Years with NORTHCOAST:** 3

**3 people (living or dead) you would like to have dinner with:**

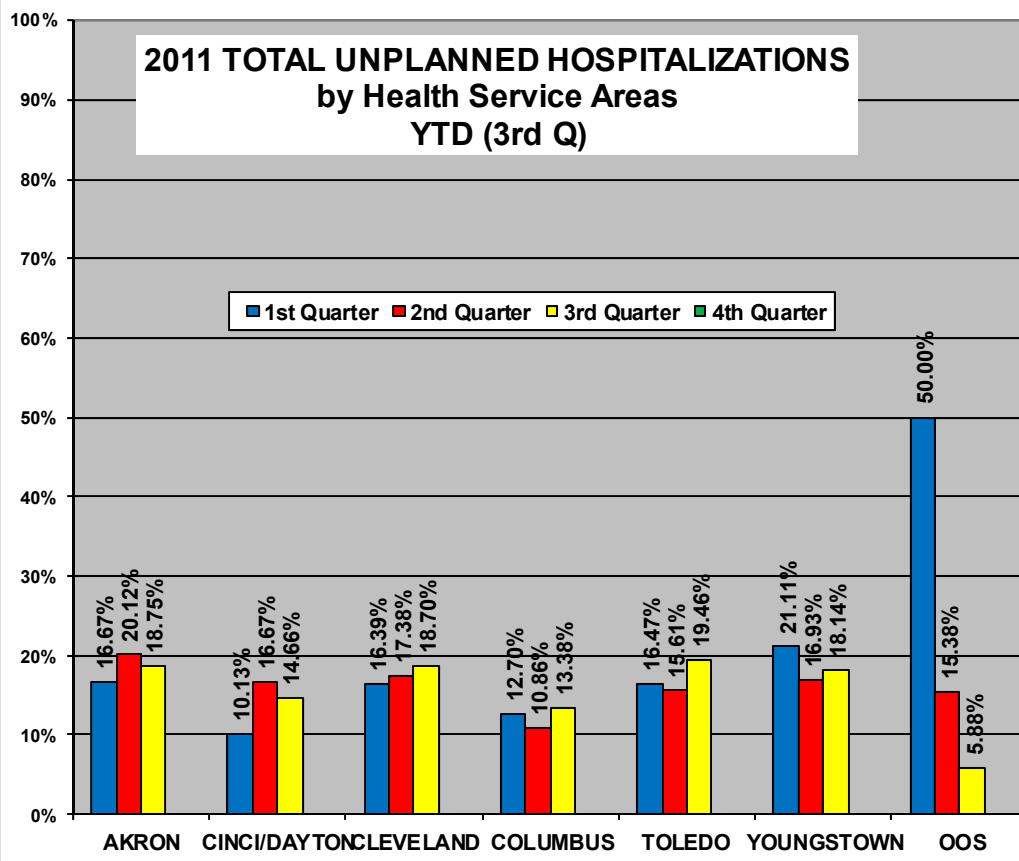
Walt Disney—a genius for his time, my Grandma and my Aunt—because I miss them.

**Words to live by:** Smile, it will make people wonder what you've been up to.

**What phrase describes you best:**

A work in progress

**I love to read and learn new things.**



### ☺ Just for FUN ☺

Unscramble the letters  
 Clue: WHAT WE WISH FOR  
 (Answer in next issue)

C	E	E	P	A
N		O		
R	T	E	H	A

From last newsletter: Wash your hands

### December, 2011 Volume VI, Issue 2

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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- Unplanned Hospitalizations
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- Network News: Retirements, Anniversaries and New Staff