



community health care services foundation, inc.  
*the premier educational resource  
for home care and hospice*

# F OCUS

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## **CHC's new back injury prevention guide can help industry reduce workers' comp claims**



HC and the Health Care Providers Self-Insurance Trust (HCPSIT) have joined forces to produce the "Back Injury Prevention Guide for Home Care Providers."

Underwritten by HCPSIT and published by CHC, this is the only guide addressing back injuries that is specifically designed and written for home care agencies.

According to CHC President Phyllis Wang, focusing the new guide on back injuries will result in the greatest possible benefit to home care agencies and employees as "back injuries have long been recognized as the number one injury problem in home care."

HCPSIT, an affiliate of the New York State Association of Health Care Providers Inc. (HCP), is a self-insurance trust for workers' compensation insurance that has been saving money for home care and community-based providers since 1993. Program Risk Management, Inc. (PRM) is the program administrator for HCPSIT and its safety and loss control experts contributed to the Guide.

"Reducing injuries has been a key goal for the Trust since its inception," said John Conroy, PRM President. "Trust data proves conclusively that home care agencies that succeed in reducing injuries and claims will see a financial benefit to their bottom line."

The Guide is divided into three sections with recommendations for senior administrators, field employee supervisors, and direct care employees. The Guide tells how to analyze the home workplace with the aim of creating a safe work environment; how to identify and implement options to work safely; and how to evaluate the results.

The Guide is available for purchase in bulk; it is recommended that every branch office have at least one copy. (All HCPSIT participants were sent a copy at no charge.) The Guide can be ordered from the CHC website ([www.chcforum.org/pdf/backguide.pdf](http://www.chcforum.org/pdf/backguide.pdf)) and HCP members can order online through the HCP Bookstore ([www.nyshcp.org/members](http://www.nyshcp.org/members)). Price for a single copy is \$24.95 for an HCP member; volume discounts are available.

# 3 prescriptions

## for grant-writing success

In the last issue of *Focus*, we discussed the benefits of grant funding for home and community-based organizations and outlined strategies for developing a grant writing process. In this article, we asked three organizations who have recently been awarded grants to share lessons learned about their grant writing experiences.

**By Charissa Ashman**  
Administrator of Grants  
& Demonstrations

**T**ragedies like Hurricane Katrina have forced a shift in public and private spending priorities. As more organizations compete for dwindling funds in the future, high-quality grant proposals will be critical to getting funded. So, how do you know you've done your best work? First, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the grant make sense to a reader far removed from the project?
- Have you answered all the questions on the Request for Proposal (RFP)?
- Do you have a reasonable budget?
- How will you sustain your project after the funding period?

*Now, let's take a look at how three New York home care agencies successfully received grant awards.*

### At Home Care Inc.

*Freestanding, not-for-profit corporation providing Medicare-certified home health care services to patients in Otsego, Herkimer and Delaware Counties since 1987. Member corporations of At Home Care, Inc. are the A.O. Fox Memorial Hospital in Oneonta, NY and the M.I. Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, NY. At Home Care recently opened a Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA), At Home Care Partners, Inc.*

Earlier this year, At Home Care was one of 30 home care agencies selected statewide to participate in the New York State Department of Health (DOH) Telemedicine Demonstration Project. The grant award of \$117,500 will expand At Home Care's existing telemedicine project from 20 patient home monitors to 40.

*Goals of the grant:* To reduce emergency room treatment and re-hospitalizations, improve nursing availability and productivity, and increase patient quality of life.

### Independent Health Care Services, Inc.

*For-profit LHCSA located in Syracuse. Independent provides private duty nursing, home health aide, personal care aide and homemaker/companion services to patients in Onondaga County and is licensed in nine counties in*

*Central New York. Independent is affiliated with Visiting Nurse Association of Central New York, Inc. under a parent corporation, VNA Systems, Inc.*

In 2002, Independent received a two-year grant from DOH under the "Health Care Worker Training Initiative." The agency received \$115,975 to provide training and education, job support, and work supplies for newly hired home health aides.

*Goals of the grant:* To develop well-trained employees who become long-term employees, provide opportunities for established employees to serve as peer mentors, and provide individual case management for the first six months of employment.

### South Shore Home Health Services, Inc.

*For-profit LHCSA providing nursing, home health aide, personal care aide, and private duty nursing services to patients located in Suffolk, Nassau, Queens, Kings, New York, and Westchester Counties.*

South Shore will receive a grant award of \$120,000 under the DOH Telemedicine Demonstration Project. The agency will purchase telemedicine equipment for patients with congestive heart failure, hypertension and diabetes to provide disease management for their conditions.

*Goals of the grant:* To reduce hospitalizations for the chronically ill which will result in overall cost savings and improved health status for patients.

### Lesson One: Develop a Good Case

The primary key to success for these organizations was their ability to document *effectively* the need for their projects. Provide as much data or empirical evidence as exists for the project's geographic area. While we will not detail each organization's needs assessment approach, the table on page 3 outlines some of the "underlying themes" that supported their need for funding.

### Lesson Two: Develop a Grant Writing Process

Writing a grant becomes less onerous when organizations

<u>At Home Care</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>South Shore</u>
Predominantly rural region	Shortage of paraprofessional workers and costs to the agency	Incidence of congestive heart failure, hypertension and diabetes
Lengthy driving distances	One-year retention rates were very low	Hospitalization costs
Growth in demand among the aging	Need for training in addition to the standard orientation	Little medical management of patients historically
Incidence of heart disease and associated costs	Data and research to support a "job adjustment" period	Aging patient caseload in a fairly urban area
Nursing shortage and costs to the agency	Data and research that linked training and job support with greater job satisfaction	Health status of patients under current home care model compared to telehealth

use a team approach. For example, how will grant ideas be developed and who are the key players involved? Who will locate funding sources? Who is responsible for writing the proposal? Who will proofread and make the necessary revisions? Who will obtain letters of support or commitment? The process will vary depending on an organization's size and resources, but the steps will not.

Laurie Neander, Executive Director of **At Home Care**, says the idea behind the agency's Telehealthcare Initiative originated from a belief in the value of technology to the organization's mission. Understanding that collaboration with grant partners is essential, the agency researched technology vendors, worked with member hospital partners, and met with legislators to garner support for their goals. Neander took the lead to prepare, write, and submit proposals in this organization.

At the time **Independent** applied for its TANF Grant, there was no formal grants process. Lynn Holstein, Executive Vice President/COO, developed the grant idea based on prior home care experience and then secured approval for the application from the VNA Systems, Inc. Senior Management Team and the Board of Directors. Once approved, she developed the grant application including objectives, content, timelines, and budget and sent it to the Executive Vice President of Finance for review.

Since that time, a grants team has been formed that includes representatives from clinical, financial, legal and information technology divisions of the organization. For the next grant, Independent held weekly structured meetings to discuss specific roles and deadlines for completing aspects of the proposal. By assigning tasks to a larger number of staff they were able to do more up-front planning and development. Their efforts paid off this July when they learned their most recent proposal had been approved.

**South Shore's** grants process started at a team meeting where a telemedicine proposal was discussed. Carol Kolar, Director of Patient Services at South Shore, said the team agreed that telemedicine would be an effective way to help patients gain control over their diseases. Leadership then assigned a committee to develop the proposal consisting of the Director of Patient Services, a Nursing Supervisor and Information System Manager. The team requested input from a local university technology dean. He was quite interested in the project and provided South Shore with statistics for their proposal. Three staff members worked at least 10-15 hours each week for a total of ten weeks to prepare their proposal.

*Continued on page 4*

# Upcoming educational events

To register for an event, visit [www.chcforum.org](http://www.chcforum.org) or call 518/463-1167, ext. 817.

## Home Care Safety in Emergencies and Disasters

November 15, 2005  
 Webinar, 9:30 - 11:00 am EST  
 Presenter: Jim Pavoldi, ARM, ALCM, Director of Loss Control, Program Risk Management

Free for all SIT participants  
 \$169 HCP Members  
 \$269 Non-Members

While it is unlikely that New York will suffer anything like a Hurricane Katrina, other emergencies and disasters could be a reality where we work and live. Is your agency prepared for these situations? More importantly, is your staff? Do they know what to do and how to keep themselves and their patients safe? Get the basics and more at a seminar you can't afford to miss!

## Forum #22: Four Steps to Case Management Excellence

November 17, 2005  
 Audio conference, 3 - 4:00 pm EST  
 Presenter: Michelle Dubner, Global Healthcare Concepts

Free for all registered Forum participants

Professionals who coordinate care and services of home care clients need to attend this case-oriented, **free** learning session.

You will learn: what case management really is and all it encompasses in daily work activities; tangible benefits resulting from effective case management; four steps to incorporate into your work habits that will improve your skills; and specific techniques that should be employed and improved when implementing the four steps.

# Grant writing success

Continued from page 3

## Lesson Three: Challenges are a Springboard for Future Improvement

Even with strong project management skills, there are obstacles encountered along the way. Here is what these organizations learned:

- “Staff time devoted to grant activities is underestimated. . . [we] struggled to complete grant activities in addition to regular workloads. A lesson learned was to request money for additional staff to carry out grant activities.”
- “Tracking staff time is complicated and time consuming. Reports required by the funder are not always easy to complete. It is important to develop tools to track grant activities.”
- “Proposal writing requires tremendous focus, time and attention to the most finite detail — font size, page number, statistical data, etc. Don’t underestimate the time it takes to write a proposal.”
- “After all the work, some proposals are not funded for a variety of reasons, including issues with definitions and partner relationships. While there is huge disappointment, the organization must stay committed to the concept and keep trying!”

## Lesson Four: Wisdom Never Hurt Anyone

These organizations have provided valuable information about grant writing. Despite challenges faced along the way, all three organizations were successful in the end. We commend them for their hard work and thank them for sharing their experiences!

Following are some closing words of wisdom:

- “Seek input for improvement from the grant funding source—learn from failures to determine why the project was not funded.”
- “Consider using an outside source in the development of your proposal.”
- “Ask a successful grant writer to review the abstract to be sure it is clear, concise and succinct.”
- “Read and re-read the requirements of the grant application and technical detail.”
- “Educate legislators and policymakers about the relevance of the project.”
- “Try, try again!”
- “Base grant applications on one or two measurable goals. Define outcomes to enable data collection.”
- “If you are awarded funding, form a team to plot out how to translate the promises you made on paper into a program that works.”
- “Devote sufficient time to proposal writing and ensure that people working on the project are committed to its success.”



**FOCUS**

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