



A New Community of Care for Those with Mental Illness: prasAda

By Claudia Ress, NHA & Tami Kendall, Director of Resident Services

prasAda...it is a Sanskrit word that means serenity or that which brings peace. At Cornerstone Care Center it is the name of a behavioral community. In the spring of 2003, Cornerstone Care Center in conjunction with Piñon Management renovated what once was an Alzheimer's Unit into a physical environment that exemplifies the meaning of prasAda. It is the subtle differences that create this pleasing environment: colored towels hang from the towel racks, original artwork and stenciling decorate the halls, a rose garden flourishes on the patio, and decorative rugs line the floor.

Prior to admitting residents to this community, all staff completed a four week training led by Piñon Management that included 27-10 training, Crisis Prevention Intervention to include both verbal and physical redirection techniques, communication skills, team building exercises, care planning, insight into the ups and downs of mental illness, and most importantly Culture Change. All staff is cross-trained to do nursing, social work, housekeeping/laundry, dietary and activities.

Piñon Management is a pioneer in The Culture Change Movement in Colorado. prasAda exemplifies what this really is meant to be for the residents in long-term care. It is about choices and relationships. It is about having the freedom to make bad choices yet still knowing that one is safe. It is about forming relationships with those that we choose. In the simplest of terms it is about being alive, respecting one's dignity, and most importantly, Culture Change is about recognizing people as individuals.


This is not to say that prasAda stands on its own. Jefferson Center for Mental Health has played a large part in the success of prasAda. There are currently 12 certified residents that live on prasAda and some of those have long histories of only being able to function in a setting like the State Hospital. JCMH has been an integral part in supporting the vision of prasAda and taking some chances with some seriously ill individuals.

The backbone of this community is the innovative programming that allows the residents to benefit not only from the knowledge of the staff but also from each other. On any given day there is an interactive group on personal power or anger management, soul food, healthy lifestyles or stress management. The residents are learning to help themselves; they are learning to help each other. The first twelve residents that moved into prasAda set the tone for everyone else. They created

their own community; each resident that enters prasAda is welcomed at evening wrap-up group and invited into this elite group. It is hard to imagine that the team designing this environment could have envisioned such wonder and magic. The residents are accountable to each other. They have high expectations of themselves and of each other. In many of the groups, staff gets the ball rolling and then the residents run the show. One resident in particular contacted some organizations and set up a substance abuse group. He and the other gentleman currently running the group thought that some outside input would be beneficial. What better way to learn but from a peer? What better way to build self-esteem and self-confidence but from being given the opportunity to lead a group, to be empowered? The vision in this regard isn't tangible; you can't touch what just is.

Anyone that has ever worked with a behavioral population knows that there are tried and true ways to deal with behavioral incidents, after the fact. The nature of prasAda is to address the potential. Yoga is a relaxation technique that is practiced daily. Aromatherapy, massage, healing touch and understanding an individual's triggers are an expectation of the community.

In the short time that prasAda has been in existence there are many success stories. Success isn't defined in concrete terms but rather in the personal growth that is seen in the residents of prasAda. The reality is that no one wants to live in a secured environment; no one wants to be told when he or she can smoke or have a soda. Growth is shown in not just accepting our situations but in working hard to change them. A transitional pass program is in place on prasAda that puts the "transition ball" into the resident's court. There will always be the question, "when can I get out of here?" However there is a certain freedom in being told, "That ball is in your court."

Visitors to prasAda comment on the environment, they comment on the computer and that the den is nicer than the one in their house but the biggest compliment that can be heard is when a resident steps forward and tells that visitor, "they treat me good here and when I make it through this program, I know I can make it out there." 

Claudia Ress, *Nursing Home Administrator,*
Cornerstone Care Center

Tami Kendall, *Resident Services Director,*
Cornerstone Care Center

News & Events

WINNERS:

Congratulations to Piñon Management Winners and Finalists for the Colorado Health Care Association Spotlight on Excellence 2003 Awards:

- Holly Raymer, Julia Temple Center
Administrator of the Year
- Tom Duran, Julia Temple Center
Nurse of the Year
- Faraj El Maragani, Julia Temple Center
Environmental Staff of the Year
- Barb Rardin, Colorow Care Center
Finalist, Social Services Award
- Lanette Wagner, Holly Nursing Center
Finalist, Activities Award
- Dorian Bledsoe, Julia Temple Center
Finalist, Medical Records Award
- Debbie McPeek, Valley View Health Care Center
Finalist, Nurse Award
- Mary Ann Bateman, Julia Temple Center
Finalist, Partners in Quality

In addition, 32 Piñon Management employees were nominated for these awards by their facilities, families, and residents. We congratulate all of you on outstanding excellence!

SPEAKERS:

The following Piñon Corporate staff were featured speakers and panelists at this year's Colorado Health Care Association Fall Conference held in Denver, Sept. 23-25:

CJ Roche, Mary Manning, Dr. Fred Feinsod, Carmen Bowman, Jeff Jerebker, Nancy Schwalm, Ann Evans, and Kelley Hamm.

Carole Ball, Activity Director, Mary Jane Mahan and Claudia Percivel, CNAs, all of Colorow Care Center were part of the Panel Discussion on Culture Change at the CHCA Fall Conference.

Jennifer Brown, Director of Resident Services, Julia Temple Center was featured as a Speaker at both New Mexico and Colorado Health Care Association Conferences. Jennifer's presentations were on "Dementia & Behavior: What Do I Do Now?"

Nancy Schwalm was a featured speaker at the Utah Health Care Association Fall Conference held in Salt Lake City in September.

Carmen Bowman has been an ongoing featured speaker on culture change at numerous events including: July 22-23 Second Wind Dreams Conference, Atlanta; November Ombudsman Training, Colorado Springs; 12/6-8 American College of Health Care Administrators on Compliance and Culture Change.

Chris Cosgrove was a featured Culture Change speaker at Peak Managements Corporate Awards Seminar September 23rd and at Denver Health Medical Center in November teaching on Grief and Loss.

Jeff Jerebker spoke at the Older Adults Mental Health Advisory Committee on October 9, 2003, on Nursing Home Perspective about Problems and Concerns of Residents and Staff. Representing Piñon Management on this Committee is Bob Murray, LCSW.

EVENTS:

Piñon Management facilities participated in statewide Alzheimer's Association Memory Walks during September. Our Metro Team totaled over 120 residents, families, employees, children, and pets. Statewide Piñon teams raised over \$3,500 for this great cause.

Many exciting things are happening at Arkansas Manor. The facility will soon be officially renamed to North Star Community. The facility has also been selected to be a provider for Total Long Term Care and is very excited about this new partnership in quality care and services.

Piñon Management's Executive Team and Laguna Rainbow staff and Board members hosted tables as part of a benefit for the New Mexico Community Foundation on October 25, in Albuquerque. The fund raiser featured a tribute to the Daniels family, family of Lt. Governor Denish. Laguna Rainbow has been a recipient of Foundation support for its dedication to the Laguna tribe in serving the needs of Indian elders.

Julia Temple Center was host on October 28th for a tour by Lori Trullinger, Southwest District Pilot International Governor, official visitor of the Columbine Pilot Club. The Club sponsors Julia Temple Center as one of their hands-on projects and has honored Julia Temple Center for its dedication to excellence in serving those with memory care needs.

CJ Roche, Nancy Schwalm, and John Brammeier were invited to represent local skilled nursing and assisted living long-term care providers during a Denver PBS taping of "And Thou Shalt Honor Town Hall Meeting on Care Giving." The program, moderated by Bertha Lynn on Channel 7 News, is part of a national effort to support family caregivers through advocacy, public education, and multimedia communications. The program is planned to air on PBS television stations January 2004.

University of Piñon (UP) kicks off in 2004 offering career pathway training programs for staff seeking upward mobility and career ladder opportunities in long-term care. Classes are designed to teach participants job-specific skills prior to being promoted or hired into a Management level role. Our first course will be for nurses who want to become MDS Coordinators. Future classes will be offered for AIT's, DON-in-Training, C.N.A. classes and other Facility Department Head positions. For information or to enroll, contact Nancy Schwalm, Piñon Management, (303)987-3088.

Piñon Management's JOB HOTLINE Number has been changed to 720-974-6276. ☺



Not a Zero-Sum Game

By Mary Fuentes - Director of Finance

Are there winners and losers in Medicaid reimbursement?

Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* about the Oracle/PeopleSoft/J.D. Edwards saga, Lynn Stout, Professor of Law at UCLA, highlights differences between the shareholder primacy model and the team production model of business decision-making.

Although ostensibly unrelated, I believe there is a message here for Medicaid reimbursement policy.

The shareholder primacy model, grounded in corporate law, prioritizes decision-making based on creating shareholder wealth; other considerations are secondary. Customers and suppliers give and take, but wealth primarily flows upstream to shareholders. The decision that benefits the shareholders – one set of stakeholders - is the right decision.

In the team production model, *all stakeholders* have the right to a fair return on their investments.

The universe of long-term care stakeholders includes:

- Shareholders/owners/lenders who contribute financial capital and assume risk of loss,
- Taxpayers whose dollars fund the Medicaid program and also fund alternative care such as charity care in public hospital emergency rooms,
- Government agencies with fiduciary responsibility for taxpayer dollars and social welfare,
- Employees and suppliers who contribute time, products, services, expertise, creativity and loyalty,
- Communities whose geographic proximity to long-term care facilities impacts the economic and aesthetic values of their properties and whose volunteers help sustain and support those facilities,
- Residents and families who have no less at stake than their lives.

In the team production model, decisions are made in light of all these participants. No one group is favored to the exclusion or exploitation of others.

Extend the paradigm further and consider: Is there a model wherein various stakeholders participating with a "Getting to Yes" mentality, can prompt the reimbursement system to generate a whole greater than the sum of its parts? Is there a model

wherein multiple interests are accommodated and social and financial value are *added*?

Among many possibilities, I suggest one practical and sorely needed strategy to add such value: Relieve part of the enormous administrative burden of the current complex reimbursement system:

- Streamline eligibility processing along the often gnarled critical paths between providers and state and county agencies,
- Reduce the volume of paperwork,
- Simplify and expedite rate setting processes and timelines.

Then redirect these human and financial resources to enhanced medical and psychosocial care. Such alternate use of funds is clearly consistent with recent published statements from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, The Pioneer Network and other groups – calling for quality incentives to be an integral component of reimbursement.

Piñon Management wholeheartedly supports and is actively participating in the collaborative efforts of the Colorado Medicaid program and the network of long-term care providers to redefine the State's reimbursement system for the enhanced benefit of multiple participants. We applaud the State's initiative. We welcome participants' creative energies. We need to persist until there is a new model that improves care, trims administrative costs, rewards participants and creates, rather than merely redistributes, value.

It shouldn't be a zero-sum game. ☺

"There almost always exists the possibility of joint gain. This may take the form of developing a mutually advantageous relationship, or of satisfying the interests of each side with a creative solution."

Roger Fisher & William Ury, Getting to Yes, The Harvard Negotiation Project

Culture Change Travels to New Mexico

By Carmen Bowman & Nancy Schwalm

Culture change is about changing perceptions. Culture change presents a forum for stakeholders to rally around a common good.

Recently Piñon Management had the opportunity to meet with members of the New Mexico Ombudsman program and Department of Aging. Newly appointed New Mexico Cabinet Secretary Michelle Grisham invited Piñon Management to share an overview of the culture change movement. Piñon partnered with the Colorado Culture Change Coalition and the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

Piñon CEO and owner Jeff Jerebker began with a discussion of the value of partnership by reviewing Piñon's long history of culture change through its psychosocial model.

Nancy Schwalm, Piñon Business Development Director and Debbie Armstrong of the Department of Aging coordinated the event. As the President of the CCCC Board, Nancy provided an overview of the coalition from start-up to the present.

Carmen Bowman, a Culture Change Coordinator

for Piñon, presented on the national grassroots culture change movement, the Pioneer Network, national outcomes and Colorado culture change in action.

Julie Christiansen, Long Term Care Ombudsman with the Denver Regional Council of Governments, led a discussion about the role of the ombudsman and the opportunities afforded them to share information about innovation within long term care.

Along with Michelle Grisham, other staff involved were regional ombudsmen, regional ombudsman directors, two staff attorneys, and the state ombudsman, Katrina Holtrun. As a next step, the group brainstormed ideas on how a New Mexico coalition could be formed and the potential stakeholders who could partner in this endeavor.

As in Colorado, in order for perceptions to change and culture change to flourish, a meeting of the minds could further this effort. We commend the New Mexico Department of Aging for taking this initiative. Piñon looks forward to future partnering with New Mexico on their journey to culture change. ☺



A Tribute to a Dedicated Leader: John Stovall

By Nancy Schwalm - Director of Business Development

Over 40 years ago, John Stovall, a young and enthusiastic deacon of Zion Baptist Church in Denver, had a dream. Having visited a local nursing home, he experienced deplorable conditions of care, and recognized his personal mission to help meet the needs of elders in his community. Within a short time, during October 1962, the Zion Church Pastor asked Deacon Stovall to work on a church relocation plan. With this new role, Mr. Stovall saw the opportunity to identify with the greater cause of Zion Baptist Church and also bring his personal dream into fruition.

Out of the church relocation effort, John Stovall was able to help develop a community campus for seniors, consisting of independent apartments at Liggins Tower, the beautiful community Zion Senior Center, and a 60-bed skilled nursing facility, aptly named for the visionary and dedicated Mr. Stovall.

Stovall Care Center opened in 1977. Its mission: to serve the black elder community and as Mr. Stovall recently shared at a Board meeting, "to care for people who need care." Stovall has been a 52-year resident of Denver, and has been a quiet, caring example of his desire to "make life better, make the community more caring." Serving on the Board of Directors for Stovall Care Center, Mr. Stovall has been instrumental in generating community involvement and support for the needs of its elders. He has personally provided extensive time and leadership to promote resident well-being and spiritual support.

Over the past several months, the facility has suffered a decline in census and revenue. On October 8th, the Board of Directors made the difficult decision to close the facility and begin the process of assisting residents to find new homes. As Mr. Stovall shared, his hope would be to "relocate residents with dignity, safety, and a caring arm."

Piñon Management was asked by the Stovall Board of Directors to assist in the facility closure process to assure an optimal transition for residents, families, and Stovall employees. Piñon Management has had an affinitive relationship with Stovall Care Center and its Board for the past several years.

Through the very sad closure process, an amazing team of caring and supportive individuals including the Board, families, Stovall employees, Health Care Policy and Finance, Ombudsman, Colorado Department of Health, and many statewide providers and agencies, all assisted Piñon Management in helping keep John Stovall's vision of "caring for those who need care" at the center our mission.

As a true Sage, John Stovall exemplifies a part of the long-term care community that has the courage and vision to act on his personal dream to put the higher purpose of serving others at the forefront of community and professional responsibility. We thank him for his role in dedicated service to Colorado's elders. ☺

Open Letter to John Holland



Dear John,

It was great reminiscing about the landmark Smith vs. O'Hallerin case which greatly contributed to nursing home reform, a revamping of the survey process,

the concept of "highest practical," the elevation of resident rights and quality of life. Your contribution as well as Paul Daraghy's deserves recognition. The fact that the State of Colorado joined with the plaintiff against the feds illuminates the pivotal role Colorado once enjoyed.

OK, John, that was then and now it's time for a new birth. We both share an admiration for Bob Dylan. Remember his classic line "He not busy being born is busy dying?" OBRA is dead. It died with "zero tolerance," and an over-emphasis on zealous enforcement without any incentives for innovation or change. The system was unable to accommodate the radical implications of OBRA. As a matter of fact I would state that zero tolerance and innovation cannot co-exist anymore than light and dark-

ness can co-exist. Lawsuits against nursing homes have hurt good providers even more than the bad ones. Insurance premiums have tripled while Medicaid dollars shrink, leaving less money for essential nursing home reform.

We stand on the precipice of a new movement. We call it "Culture Change," but we are talking about real transformational change of the way residents reside in nursing homes. Open dining programs, neighborhoods, enhanced bathing, community meetings, and cross-trained workers are the tip of the iceberg of this movement. Piñon Management has embarked on this daunting journey. Can a values-based, for-profit management company blaze this trail? We think we can and I believe that you can re-invent yourself as Dylan has so many times and contribute to this incipient movement.

May you stay forever young,

Jeff
PS Great picture! ☺

Piñon's Involvement with Culture Change: Locally to Internationally

By Carmen Bowman - Culture Change Coordinator

Piñon participated in the first ever **Pioneer Network Cruise - Rocking the Boat** - to the Bahamas September 19-22, 2003. Jeff Jerebker, CJ Roche, Nancy Schwalm and Carmen Bowman attended. Time was divided between educational sessions, networking with other "Pioneers," and exploring Nassau. We heard success stories of facilities on the culture change path with outcomes such as decrease in turnover rates and increased census as well as encouragement to be bridge builders to a new way of providing long-term care. During a sightseeing excursion to Nassau, a nursing home was visited. As there is no money for government assisted care, the conditions we saw, which would be deplorable to us, were being given to the Bahamian elders out of the goodness of the caregivers' hearts.

Piñon was a co-sponsor of the Colorado Culture Change Coalition Oct. 24th event, **A New Direction in Colorado Long Term Care**, with Steve Shields, Pioneer and Executive Director of Meadowlark Hills in Manhattan, KS. Steve spoke to the current state of long term care, our obligation to change it and a future vision. This event was part of a two part seminar: the first geared toward Colorado legislators, key government agencies and ownership/corporate management. The second session was for the general public where Steve shared his story of transforming care at Meadowlark. An afternoon session was presented by Steve to Piñon Management corporate and facility staff.

Piñon's presence was also made at the annual **American Health Care Association** conference in San Diego Oct. 12-15. The Piñon Executive team - Jeff Jerebker, CJ Roche, John Brammeier, and Nancy Schwalm - comprised a panel and presented "Out of Crisis: Turning Around the Troubled Facility." Culture change was cited as a key component of turning a crisis facility around. Carmen Bowman also spoke with Karen Schoeneman of CMS Central Office on "Compliance and Culture Change." Carmen and Karen were also co-presenters of this same topic at the annual **American Association of Homes and Services to the Aging** conference in Denver Oct. 27-29.

Karen Schoeneman, Senior Policy Analyst, with CMS Central Office in Baltimore paid Piñon a visit during her time in Denver. On the afternoon of Oct. 30th there was an informal chat with Karen who shared updates with Piñon on new survey process, CMS contracts, research and culture change. Karen is a charter member of the Pioneer Network.

All Piñon Management facilities are actively engaged in involving residents and families in the ongoing transformation of the "institutional model" to person-centered communities. Watch for more culture change news as Piñon continues to take the forefront in Colorado! ☺

Check List for Evaluating a Nursing Home

A Culture Change Perspective

A CULTURE CHANGE PERSPECTIVE

Culture change means a focus on quality of care and quality of life in a person-centered homelike environment. This check list is meant to be an addition to the more traditional considerations in selecting a care facility. Here are questions which can be discussed.

ABOUT RESIDENT CHOICE

Can residents get up and go to bed as they wish?
Is there flexibility in bathing: times, places?
Do residents routinely participate in care planning?
Are there opportunities for residents to volunteer?
Are drinks or snacks available when desired?
Are community outings available?

ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Does the facility hold community meetings?

How is resident expertise and experience used?

Does the facility provide transportation to community events?

Does the facility have pets?

What is considered in selecting roommates?

Is there a family council?

Are families routinely included in care plan meetings?

ABOUT STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

Does the facility have a philosophy or mission statement?

What does the facility do to encourage staff retention?

Is there a permanent assignment of staff to residents?

How are staff recognized?

What do you do to prevent staff turnover? ☺

Miss "M."

By Ryan Jude - Activity Director, Julia Temple Center

While all of our residents are special, one endears herself to all she meets. We'll call her Miss M. Miss M. was raised in Littleton and lived her entire life in the same house, first with her parents, then with her husband. She was voted Miss Littleton in the 1930's. Through the years she lost all members of her family but had a very special friend. As this lifelong friend lay dying, she asked her daughter to look after Miss M. and this daughter became Miss M.'s guardian. When it became apparent that Miss M. could no longer care for herself, her guardian brought her to us. She has been here for several years and she always makes our administrator cry by saying, "If I had a chance to go back to my house I wouldn't. Everyone here is so nice. This is my home."

Her guardian tells many interesting stories about Miss M.'s younger days including the time her mother and Miss M. got stuck in a dumpster and had to be rescued by the fire department. While she has given

up dumpster diving, Miss M. remains quite active and participates in most of our programs.

Miss M. especially enjoys arts and crafts activities, though she had never painted until she attended our Memories in the Making classes. She did not begin timidly for someone who started at an advanced age. She has painted elaborate landscapes, warm family scenes, and has made her own version of several Van Gogh's. She now insists on painting several times a week and is especially proud that one of her paintings sold at our facility auction for \$50.00. It's said that Van Gogh couldn't trade his paintings for a drink in his lifetime so this puts Miss M. way ahead.

Miss M. charms us with her wit and easy smile. She inspires us all to push the boundaries of our jobs and attempt to do better each day. I've even tried to think of how I can incorporate dumpster diving onto our activity calendar. ☺

Colorow is Cruising with the Dolphins

By Carmen Bowman - Associate Director of Life Enhancement

On the trail of culture change I stopped at Colorow Care Center to talk to the three staff persons who had gone on the Pioneer cruise. I wanted to learn what they brought back, what they heard that was important to culture change and to their roles.

Upon entering, I was captured first by an atmosphere of quiet and contentment. Mary Pfalzgraff, Administrator, says it is a gentleness of spirit. Others refer to "The Spirit of Colorow" but can't define it. Is it the soft adobe look of the exterior; is it the southwestern décor chosen by residents? Is it a "homelike" atmosphere; is it the energy of the administrator to bring a team together? Is it communication going on between residents and staff? It is all of the above. There is a feeling of community here.

Carole Ball, Activity Director, Mary Jane Mahan and Claudia Percivel, CNAs, were chosen by a facility committee to attend the Pioneer cruise, a premier educational effort for culture change. They talked about their experiences, the speakers, the interaction with others from all parts of the country in many different roles. What they found and what I heard from

them was an increased recognition of the significance of their roles and just how important their relationships with residents are.

Staff and residents wanted to hear what they learned. A culture change committee has developed as a result. One of the resident members, Rena Moon, told me she believes both residents and staff are speaking up for changes they want. Her personal example was that her oxygen tubing used to be changed in the middle of the night, waking her up. She was wakened again at 5:30 a.m. for a nebulizer treatment. That routine has changed.

The most exciting event on the cruise for the three staff members was the opportunity to swim with dolphins. They talked about the exhilaration of being pushed by the dolphins... the feeling of closeness, the excitement of new ways of being and new ways of relating. It seems that the cruise provided that kind of push with new energy and insight.

Colorow is now symbolically swimming with the dolphins. ☺

Holly Raymer: Administrator of the Year

By Claire Lucas-Warren - Regional Director of Operations

Recently Holly Raymer was recognized at Colorado Health Care Association as the 2003 Administrator of the Year. We at Piñon are so proud of Holly and her accomplishments.

Holly grew up in long term care. Both her mom and dad were nurses. Holly's mom went back to school and became a Nursing Home Administrator. Holly started in long term care volunteering in the facility where her mom worked. Holidays were frequently spent at the nursing home enjoying activities with the residents.

Holly finished high school early and went to work at (you guessed it) the nursing home her mom worked at. Holly wanted to be a Nursing Assistant, but there were no openings, so she started out in the Dietary department. Over the years, Holly has worked as a Nursing Assistant, Medical Records, Social Services, Activities, Business Office Manager, Regional Bookkeeper and Nursing Home Administrator.

Most of Holly's career she has worked for American Housing Foundation, whose four Metro Denver facilities have been managed by Piñon Management since 1997.

One of the nomination letters talked about Holly's efforts during the Blizzard in March 2003. Holly and her husband had spent the night of the blizzard shuttling staff back and forth to work, ensuring a fully staffed facility. The same



writer described Holly "as a loving person, she supports her staff in anyway she can." The writer shared an example where Holly had helped an LPN who was having trouble getting to work on time by calling the LPN every morning before 5:00 a.m. to make sure she was up and ready to come to work on time. Holly is truly an Administrator who loves her staff and is dedicated to making them a success!

I asked Holly why she thinks she won the award. Holly replied "I was shocked. All I do is my job. I have great people. I get so much support from Piñon." I asked Holly if she could give any advice to other NHA's. Holly responded, "Make sure residents come first. However, you need to keep the bottom line in focus. Allow time to be with your residents." ☺

Piñon Management Joins Quality First and Develops Standards of Excellence

By Nancy Schwalm - Director of Business Development

Piñon Management has committed to be a part of the new Quality First initiative, a newly formed Covenant for Health, Affordable, and Ethical Long Term Care. The American Health Care Association (AHCA), American Association for Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) and the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care have formed the Quality First covenant, as part of their collective and individual commitment to achieving excellence in the quality of care and services for older persons and strengthening public trust. The seven core principles of Quality First include:

Continuous Quality Improvement
Public Disclosure and Accountability
Patient/Resident and Family Rights
Workforce Excellence
Public Input and Community Involvement
Ethical Practices and
Financial Stewardship

In conjunction with this effort, Piñon Management has finalized its own Standards of Excellence and will use these Standards as a primary focus in facility operations. Piñon's Standards of Excellence are:

- 1) Person Centered Care
- 2) Staff Empowerment
- 3) An Environment "Like Home"
- 4) Holistic Care and Wellness
- 5) Community Integration
- 6) Customer Service

As we roll out both of these initiatives, we will dedicate future Piñon News articles to how these concepts become an integrated part of our overall services and communities of care. ☺

