



When You Need Assistance With Healthcare

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Healthcare Liaison Graduates Nation's First Credentialed Private Healthcare Advocates — Graduates Are Pioneers In Emerging Profession

Credentialing Program Addresses Need To Set Standards For Rapidly Growing Profession; Protect Consumers

Berkeley, CA, February 24, 2009 — Healthcare Liaison has graduated the nation's first credentialed private healthcare advocates. The announcement was made today by Healthcare Liaison CEO Joanna Smith, LCSW, MPH.

"Our first graduates Michael Knappman, MPAS, and Marie Shouldice, RN are true pioneers," says Smith. "They represent the professional standard we are committed to establishing here in the US for the practice of private healthcare advocacy." Healthcare Liaison launched the country's first credentialing program for private healthcare advocates in 2007.

To become credentialed, Knappman and Shouldice successfully completed a one-year study program and passed a rigorous two-hour proficiency exam. Their course of study included modules on working with infants, children, adolescents, adults and seniors; medications management; hospital and skilled nursing facility discharge planning; private and public insurance systems; working with other healthcare providers; ethics for healthcare providers; private case management systems; and Health 2.0 information technology.

Case for credentialing. "As healthcare systems in the US become more complex and access to appropriate healthcare continues to be more problematic, a new private healthcare advocate profession is emerging," says Smith. "Consumers need a reliable way to assess the expertise, ethics and business practices of an individual practitioner. By standardizing requirements and credentialing practitioners, consumers can have greater confidence in the level of professionalism they receive from a private healthcare advocate."

Role of private healthcare advocates. According to Smith, private healthcare advocates assist clients of all ages in dealing with a number of healthcare related issues, including assessing treatment options; identifying and arranging appropriate resources; and intervening with insurers to help resolve payment or coverage issues. "Private healthcare advocates work directly for their clients and do not receive reimbursement from any other source" says Smith. "They may utilize a face-to-face model or a telephonic-based system, but the goal is the same: to guide the consumer through the complexities of the healthcare system."

About Healthcare Liaison. Healthcare Liaison is a private healthcare advocacy practice focused on complex medical case management. CEO Joanna Smith, LCSW, MPH founded Healthcare Liaison in 2005 as a social entrepreneurship after a 25-year career working in San Francisco Bay Area healthcare systems. For more information visit: www.healthcareliaison.com