As I write this letter, we are not quite three months into the transition to our new RightHealth model of care delivery. To say that this transition has not been easy is the understatement of 2012; but I hope that, at our latest series of Town Hall meetings, you felt your voices and feedback have been heard. Your leadership team is working diligently to make the necessary steps to ensure that everyone’s roles are more clearly defined and that processes are more refined to make your job easier and more enjoyable every day.

As I shared in Town Hall meetings, the transition to RightHealth is not an event, but a process. I know we are making progress and that we ARE moving proactively to address an ever-changing and ever more challenging health care world.

Have we gotten everything right? Absolutely not! Will we continue to make improvements? Without question! Will we listen to your feedback and input as we make these changes? Most definitely! I hope you saw tangible evidence in our recent Town Hall meetings that we ARE seeking to understand and to move quickly to translate your feedback into meaningful change. You can continue to support us by providing feedback and sharing your thoughts and ideas for improvements.

As we go through this process, I ask that we all keep in mind the reason why we are making these changes: Simply stated, because we believe these changes will ultimately benefit our patients and their families. For those of you who have daily patient interaction, please continue to be the fabulous ambassadors that you have always been, living out the vision as you care for your patients, and keeping a positive attitude despite the challenges we experience. For those of you who work in areas unseen by our patients, we continue to appreciate your diligence in helping our organization to succeed through functions that are more internal in nature, but just as critical to our patients and their families.

I began each Town Hall by introducing Steven Covey and his 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. One of the key habits that I mentioned was, “Begin with the end in mind.” In defining our “end in mind”, we have established a series of benchmarks to measure our success. These benchmarks focus on such areas as high patient satisfaction, quality clinical outcomes, reduced hospitalizations, and sound financial performance. Perhaps the most critical benchmark of all, however, is the measure of employee satisfaction. Throughout the years, the success of THA Group has always been, and will continue to be, the commitment, talent and creativity of our employees.

We will continue to share details about these benchmarks in the weeks to come so that we can all measure our progress. And, we will continue to challenge ourselves to be the most innovative, forward-thinking home care organization that residents of the lowcountry and surrounding areas can choose to provide Health Care. For Life. At Home.

Many Thanks and May God Continue to Bless Us,

Ellen
The next few newsletters will each spotlight a different team from The Center as a way to better connect a face with a voice that you may have spoken to over the phone or communicated with via email.

The first group that we will highlight are the Customer Intake Specialists. When a prospective client calls the company, they are greeted by the ladies on the first floor who share with them the services we provide and gather information to help determine what services are the best fit. They are also a clearinghouse for many of the telephone calls received from any type of external customer and must know who everyone is within the organization. It is imperative that top notch customer service is provided and that those in the position are incredibly knowledgeable about the services offered by all of our service lines within THA Group. They impact customer service by assisting in the transition from a prospective customer to a client of THA Group.

Customer Intake Specialists

Clockwise starting at the top: Katie Vandenhouten, Lillie Sanders, Pati Bennett, and Jessica Harvey
Enough Sleep is in Order

With summer upon us, the sun stays with us longer into the day and helps us rise earlier in the morning. This “perk” can also lead to insufficient amounts of sleep if we are not careful to still get the correct amount of sleep that our body needs.

While we often consider sleep to be a “passive” activity, sufficient sleep is increasingly being recognized as an essential aspect of health promotion and chronic disease prevention in the public health community.

Insufficient sleep is associated with a number of chronic diseases and conditions—such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and depression—which threaten our nation’s health. Notably, insufficient sleep is associated with the onset of these diseases and also poses important implications for their management and outcome.

Moreover, insufficient sleep is responsible for motor vehicle and machinery-related crashes, causing substantial injury and disability each year. In short, drowsy driving can be as dangerous—and preventable—as driving while intoxicated.

More than one-quarter of the U.S. population report occasionally not getting enough sleep, while nearly 10% experience chronic insomnia. However, new methods for assessing and treating sleep disorders bring hope to the millions suffering from insufficient sleep. Fundamental to the success of all of these efforts is the recognition that sufficient sleep is not a luxury—it is a necessity—and should be thought of as a “vital sign” of good health.

References
Summer Sunshine Leads to Fun Yet Also Can Cause Health Risks

Sponsor: American Academy of Ophthalmology (http://www.aao.org/)

The Southeast lends itself to many sunny beautiful days, however skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. Ultra-violet (UV) rays from the sun are the main cause of skin cancer. Not only can UV damage lead to cancer, it can also cause wrinkles and blotchy skin. Not only do we have to worry about skin cancer from outdoor conditions but vision can also be damaged by the sun’s powerful rays.

These are just some of the reasons why THA Group helps raise awareness of the risks of sun damage. Join us in taking action to prevent skin cancer and reduce the risk of UV damage.

- Stay out of the sun from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher.
- Cover up with long sleeves and a hat.
- Always wear sunglasses outdoors when needed, even if it is cloudy out!
- Check your skin regularly for changes.
- Plan to annually see your dermatologist.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Many Ways THA Group Works to Keep the Whole Team Informed

With various locations and a busy business to run, it can often feel that staying informed about company happenings, life events, job postings, and other important communications is a part-time job in itself!

We are working to provide many different outlets, which can serve to provide information to all segments of our company and are accessible either via a Smartphone, email, internet, or paper copy.

For general information about our organization and to share the services we offer with prospective clients, as well as to review current openings within the company, check out THA Group’s website at www.thagroup.org.

The THA Group blog is yet another way to keep in contact with our organization, learn about industry news and read inspirational stories. Our resident blogger and Director of Marketing Communications and Public Relations, Sarah Smith, creates fabulous blogs that are definitely worth reading. The link to read the blog is www.blog.thagroup.org.

For those of you who enjoy accessing information via social media, we have a THA Group Facebook page www.Facebook.com/thagroup. The Facebook page includes job postings, links to the company blog, and other industry news.

Similar information can be found on our newly created LinkedIn group for current THA Group employees as well as prospective candidates: THA Group: The “Right” Health Care Job Starts Here. Join LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com and become part of our group!

LinkedIn is a fantastic networking tool that allows people all over to connect with each other professionally.

One of the many benefits to LinkedIn is the ability for recruiters to post available positions on group pages. Once you join our group, please feel free to invite people you know, who might at some point be a good fit for our organization, to also join the group to stay aware of current vacancies.

Along with job vacancy information, you will also see discussions related to health care and a link to our blog.

Additionally on LinkedIn, we have our company page where you can “connect” with other THA Group employees.

Be sure to follow, like, bookmark or make a mental note to join us on one or all the online platforms THA Group uses to keep in contact with YOU!

Be on the lookout in the upcoming weeks for an email with an electronic survey attached, asking for your feedback on communication and recognition processes here at THA Group.
INDUSTRY NEWS

The Alpha Patient
Information gathered from the article Elder care: The struggle of losing control of their lives
By Carol Abaya
NEWJERSEYNEWSROOM.COM

Many of the clients we serve within Island Health Care, Independent Life at Home, Ideal Aging, and Island Hospice are strong-minded Alpha people—those who enjoy having control of everything and often have a harder time aging than those with more flexible personalities.

Alpha elderly, who have controlled their lifestyles, have difficulty even asking for help. Many find that the psychological effects of no longer being able to control everything in life are incredibly frustrating.

Tasks that were easy to remedy in the past are now tasks that need advance thought in order to have a successful outcome, for example, opening a cabinet door to fetch something and forgetting to shut it afterwards can result in injury, causing dizziness. All of a sudden happenings from youth can become major problems.

Having to accept limitations is not easy for anyone especially when these limitations are physical in nature. Now, listening to the body becomes even more crucial because small missteps can cause a short- or long-term physical handicap.

In order to help our clients at this age establish a daily life pattern, we may help them to develop routines to help manage daily responsibilities. The challenge increases when declining health, increased doctor’s appointments and other health-related activities mix up the newly-formed routine often resulting in frustration for the individual.

Aging experts point out that emotional issues in aging can override everything in the past and should be considered in the well-being of our patients. We as health care providers need to fully understand that we need to take the time to understand how our clients feel about getting older and take the time to work through their frustrations appropriately to help them find solutions.

Often, the spiritual aspects of life and spiritual health are overlooked when providing care in the home. The importance of emotional well-being and its influence on the healing process cannot be forgotten.

As health care providers, we are challenged to view each of our patients in a holistic way, regardless of the reason they are under our care. If we can maintain this perspective, we will continue to deliver the highest level of patient-centered care.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Important Questions to Ask as You Approach the Polls
NAHC Report August 2012

With election time right around the corner, it is important to consider how the home care and hospice industry will be impacted in upcoming months.

Below are some questions you may want to pose to candidates running for Congress—at Town Hall meetings or via Facebook, Twitter or other social media.

1. Some are suggesting the imposition of a Medicare home health copay for purposes of deficit reduction and/or offsetting the cost of fixing the flawed Medicare physician payment formula. Would you oppose the imposition of a Medicare home health copay?

2. Since 2009, the Medicare home health benefit has been cut $77 billion over ten years through a combination of legislative and regulatory payment cuts. As a result, nearly 50% of Medicare participating agencies will be under water in 2012 - that is, paid less than their costs by Medicare. Would you oppose additional cuts in home health care payments?

3. The Institute of Medicine recommended that nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training. Would you support legislation that would permit advanced practice RNs and Pas to order Medicare home health services, and allow PAs to serve as physicians when their patients enter hospice?

4. It has been long established that home care is cost effective, improves outcomes, and prevents more costly hospitalizations and nursing home stays. Do you believe it should be the responsibility of the state to ensure that beneficiaries understand and have available home care options before putting them in institutions? Should the federal government provide additional assistance to the states to rebalance their Medicaid programs to favor home care?

5. Numerous polls and studies indicate that the American public strongly supports increased public discussion of end-of-life treatments and options. What steps do you believe should be taken to increase the public discourse on care at the end of life?