

Medicaid Minute

Vol. 353 - November 12, 2010

Mississippi Division of Medicaid Gulfport, MS

231



Name - Kendra Landry
Position- RO Director, Gulfport
Family- Married - 8 Years
Husband – James
Kids—(3 (Drew, Olivia, and Paige , 1 granddaughter
High School - Gulfport High School
College- Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, U. of Southern Mississippi
Medicaid 8 years

Our DOM RO's are on our front line. Reaching out through all of our 82 counties, our DOM family shares a common mission to ensure access to quality health services for our Medicaid eligible population in the most polite, cost-efficient, and comprehensive manner possible - with full knowledge that our clients are those we are privileged to serve. Additionally, they continually pursue strategies for optimizing these performance elements.

They are committed to developing healthcare partnerships with our qualified beneficiaries through our innovative and cost-effective programs. They strive to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of those partnerships while also striving to effectively manage our limited resources each and every working day. No easy task!

Because our RO Directors safeguard the performance of our regional offices, we thought we should get to know them better through this series of Medicaid Minute interviews. Here is number two of thirty!

Kendra Landry -



Harrison County, Mississippi

Medicaid Minute

MM: Where did you work prior to Medicaid?

Kendra: As soon as I graduated from college I worked at the Department of Human Services. I started out in the Child Support Fiscal Department. I had a knack for organizational skills and I enjoyed helping [people]. I discovered that I liked it and that I was good at it. In my last couple of years [at DHS] I was a supervisor over fraud investigators. I became a little disillusioned dealing with fraud. I felt I could do more good helping the elderly and disabled.

MM: How long have you been at Medicaid?

Kendra: I have been here for nine years.

MM: You started as a Medicaid Specialist?

Kendra: Correct

MM: And you worked your way up?

Kendra: Yes.

MM: Can you remember your thoughts when you first started?

Kendra: I remember that I thought it was going to be a big change from DHS because I was looking forward to working with the elderly. That's pretty much where my thoughts were at the time. These people [the elderly] were in need of Medicaid

MM: Do you have any memories that stand out?

Kendra: During Hurricane Katrina our office was closed for three months. I was an Assistant Supervisor then and there were five of us assigned to go to a tent area in D'Iberville, and take applications there. It was a big tented area in the parking lot of a grocery store.

There was a clinic set up. At my house, we did not have electricity. Most of that area in D'Iberville had gone under about a 25 ft wave. Nobody in that area had electricity at that time. This was still probably about three weeks after the hurricane.

Most people had six or seven feet of water in their house, or over their house. Most of my family members, and my husband's family members, lost their houses completely. And that was the case with most of our clients that lived in that area. So they had a free clinic set up in that area. They had sort of an impromptu grocery store set up that was giving away free groceries and ice and water. And we were there taking Medicaid applications while the people were getting hepatitis shots. We had to get tetanus shots and all sorts of things while we were out there. We say that was a memory that stood out, but [in actuality] it was part of life at that time.

MM: When you come to work, what do you hope to accomplish?

Kendra: I try to bring a positive attitude to the office no matter what is going on. We all have our issues,

the DOM across Mississippi

Interviews with our RO Directors

Fast Facts

GULFPORT REGIONAL OFFICE

12231 Bernard Parkway

Gulfport, MS 39503

228-863-3328 (phone)

228-868-0121 (fax)

Director - Kendra Landry

Staff - 33 staff members

Assistant Supervisor - Melinda Leger

Assistant Supervisor - Ozzie Sawyers, Joann Watson, Case Reviewer III- Corrie Warren

Administrative Assistant- Jeanne Alfonso, Roslyn Pantelakis and May Smith

Medicaid Specialists- Dana Bonin, Sean Stakelum, Katrina Hines, Jeanie Yocum, Yolanda Purnell, Angella Quince, Susan Vallette, Linda Goff, Ursula Cole, Rutha Evans, Rita Ladner, Cynthia Godine, Leslie McGee, Candace Brooks, Gayla Jordan, Monica Clark, Lisa Critchfield, Christopher Moore, Teryl Clark, LaShawn Crosby, Candie Marks, Claudia Jones, Fetima Hartwell, Dee Wright, Bill Johnson.

Counties Served- Harrison

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Interviews with our RO Directors

Kendra (continued): ...but grumpy miserable attitudes impacts morale. It has a domino effect. I've seen it happen. Who would consciously choose to be miserable when you still smile. You do not necessarily have to be happy, but my rule is you do have to be nice. It's that simple.

MM: What advice do you give long time Medicaid employees?

Kendra: I really don't have advice. Rather I try to encourage them, give them praise when it is called for. Some of them could possibly give me advice. Basically I just try to be the cheerleader for them and encourage them and motivate them.

MM: What advice do you give to new employees?

Kendra: Organization is the first step to success in this job. If they do not have it, they need to get it or that will be one step towards failing. And to always just be nice to the clients.

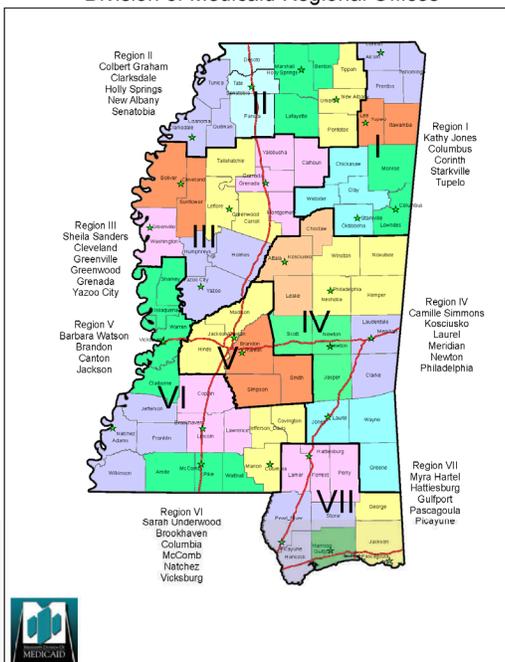
MM: In your opinion, what is Medicaid job # one?

Kendra: To deliver the most appropriate benefits to our clients in the most pleasant way you are able to.

Moving In

Employee	Position	Hire Date
Jeffery McNair	Medicaid Specialist Philadelphia Regional Office	November 1, 2010
Demetrese Evans	Operation Management Analyst Principal Bureau of Policy	November 1, 2010
Christopher Stallworth	Senior Systems Administrator Bureau of Systems	November 3, 2010
Shannon Hardwick	Pharmacists III Bureau of Pharmacy	November 15, 2010

Division of Medicaid Regional Offices



Moving Out

Employee	Position	Date
Kathy Watson	Senior Business Systems Analyst Bureau of Systems	November 30, 2010

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Left to Right: Charles Pittman-Office of the Governor, Sharon Jones, Max Wells-Office of the Governor

"Sharon assists us daily, with Governor Barbour's Medicaid constituent inquires and does so in a very professional, courteous and timely manner. In appreciation for Sharon, Max and I recently presented Governor Barbour's Certificate of Special Recognition to Sharon in the Governor's Siller's Office." Charles Pittman

The Governor's Office presented recognition to Medicaid through me for your efforts in addressing Medicaid Constituent issues.

The Governor's Office was advised that I function as a coordinator, and that Medicaid staff assist in helping beneficiaries, providers, legislators, and congressional representatives.

Thank you for your dedication, and it is recognized!



**Sharon K. Jones,
Office of Audit and Recovery**

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United Way

Especially at this time of year, we help others by making charitable contributions. The DOM United Way Campaign for 2010 began in November with a Silent Auction. We would like to thank each person who donated and purchased items from the Silent Auction and a special thanks to Emmitt Louie for setting up the online auction.

We will continue to have similar events to raise money for the United Way. The DOM has run several successful campaigns for the United Way in past years. We are hopeful this year will be successful as well because The United Way is changing lives for good, right here at home.

Upcoming events: Media Fair (November 19, 2010), Raffle Tickets, Denim Day, and Cookout.

What can you do to help with this campaign? Purchase items that are sold. Donate items that are needed to make this 2010 Campaign successful.

Have some great ideas? Please submit your ideas to Emily Thompson. Each bureau and regional office is encouraged to participate by sponsoring your own fundraiser event.

Now's the time for all of us to come together to help those who are not able to help themselves.

Thanks!

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This new Marine is Private Anthony (Tony) Briant Douglas (left side) and his proud father is Frank Douglas (Newton RO). Graduation date from Parris Island, South Carolina was 10/15/2010. Private Douglas is the great nephew of Ruth Hammons (Meridian RO). Thank you Private Douglas, and thank you to your family, for your patriotic service to our great nation!



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Catalytic Converter Theft



Photos above provided by a DOM employee who was victimized at the Sillers Building this past week. We are sorry for her loss.

Why a catalytic converter is valuable -

This device designed to reduce carbon emissions in the environment, may seem like an odd thing to steal. However, it's not the component that is so valuable. Catalytic converters are partly composed of platinum, a metal more valuable than gold. When the platinum is extracted, it can be worth hundreds of dollars. A new one can cost you well over a thousand dollars to replace. Petty thieves don't receive most of these profits, however. They are usually paid between \$40 and \$50 at a scrap yard for each converter. Metalsmiths who use advanced tools and processes to extract the platinum can then sell it at a much higher value.

How the theft occurs -

Your converter is attached to the undercarriage of your car with a few simple bolts. It takes between 60 and 90 seconds for a thief to slide beneath your vehicle with a socket wrench, unscrew the bolts holding your converter in place, detach the component and walk away.

How to detect if your converter has been stolen -

You don't need to crawl underneath your car to know if your catalytic converter has been stolen. You should be able to tell as soon as you start your vehicle. If you suddenly notice a loud, continuous noise that sounds like your muffler has fallen off, it's likely you've been a victim of catalytic converter theft.

How you can prevent catalytic converter theft -

Take the following initiatives to avoid catalytic converter theft:

1. Have the converter welded onto your car -

To prevent thieves from stealing your catalytic converter, you could have your mechanic weld it on. The main drawback is that, should you ever need to have it repaired or replaced, it will be more difficult to remove and possibly cost more for labor.

2. Park strategically - When out running errands, park in well-lit areas close to the door. If you park in your driveway, consider installing a motion spotlight over your vehicle.

3. Invest in a lock - Invest in a specially devised lock that secures your converter, and you could save yourself time and money in the long run. A few versions exist and can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$150. Many come with a warranty against theft as well.

Now that you have a good understanding of [catalytic converter theft](#) and how you can avoid becoming a victim, you should feel more prepared to deal with the situation should it happen to you or someone you know.

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Employee Assistance Program



Mississippi Division of Medicaid is happy to announce that we will be partnering with MEA Cares by offering employees and their immediate family members Employee Assistance Services **starting November 1, 2010.**

The following is a summary of the services that the MEA Cares Employee Assistance Program will provide:

What is an Employee Assistance Program or EAP? MEA Cares EAP is a counseling service for employees and their eligible dependents who may be experiencing personal or work place problems.

Is there a cost to use the EAP? **NO.** Your employer has purchased the direct counseling you receive. If you are referred to a treatment resource beyond the EAP, there generally will be costs. However, the costs may be offset in some way by your insurance plan.

Is the EAP confidential? **YES,** the EAP service is strictly confidential. No one will know you've contacted the program, and your name is never reported to your employer. We will not release any information unless you give us written permission. The only exceptions are in "Duty to Warn" cases such as child abuse or threats to self or others.

Who will actually counsel me at MEA Cares EAP? All of our counselors have a minimum of a master's degree and are licensed as: Marriage and Family Therapists, Professional Counselors, Psychologists, and/or Clinical Social Workers.

What kinds of problems does MEA Cares EAP help with?

Just about any concern imaginable can be addressed at the EAP. Issues people seek counseling for range from simple to complex and fall mainly in the following categories:

- Stress, Anxiety, Depression
- Relationship Difficulties
- Family, Extended Family & Parenting Problems
- Alcohol, Drug, or Other Addictions
- Grief, Bereavement, and Loss
- Significant Life or Workplace Change
- Financial Difficulties
- Eating Disorders
- Adoption, Pregnancy, Infertility
- Single Parenting, Blended Families
- Elderly Parent Issues

How many sessions do I receive? Employees and their dependents are provided with unlimited fifty-minute counseling sessions each year.

How do I get started? Your EAP is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Just call the EAP number listed below and inform the person you are speaking with that you are interested in speaking to a counselor. We have a variety of convenient appointment times to fit your schedule, and usually you won't have to wait more than a business day or two for your first appointment.

MEA Cares EAP

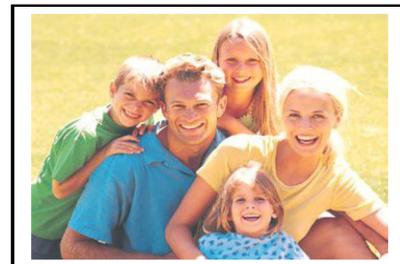
308 Corporate Drive

(1 mile south of the Renaissance in Ridgeland)

Contact Us 24 Hours A Day:

(800) 844-6503

(601) 898-7520



ME+Cares

Medicaid Minute



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November 2, 2010

MISSISSIPPI
550 High Street Suite 1000
Jackson, MS 39201-1399

Dear Medical Director:

On behalf of the American Lung Association, I want to take a moment to bring your attention to an important virus that has an impact on our most vulnerable patient population: infants and small children.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) infection causes pneumonia and acute bronchiolitis, particularly during fall and winter. In fact, RSV is so common that it affects almost all children by their second birthday. For older children, the symptoms are like those of a mild cold. However, about 75,000 to 125,000 children under a year old get very sick and are hospitalized with RSV infection each year.

The major risk factors for serious RSV infection are pre-existing conditions such as chronic lung disease and congenital heart disease. However, data also point to two additional RSV risk factors: prematurity and living with others who smoke. A recent study found that there are 22,000 hospitalizations of children from RSV each year related to parental secondhand smoke.

Much of this is preventable. The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded there is no safe level of exposure to environmental cigarette smoke. It is a risk factor not only for acute respiratory infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia but also sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), ear problems and asthma attacks for children.

Infants exposed to secondhand smoke are particularly at risk because of undeveloped defenses. As a major healthcare provider, we hope you will help us in our fight for healthy lungs and air by making new parents aware of the dangers of RSV—and by helping them to become smokefree.

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The reality is that exposure to secondhand smoke can increase the potential severity of a commonplace infection like RSV—and severely impact the health of infants and small children nationwide.

As November highlights “Prematurity Awareness Month,” please use this time to educate your members about the harm of smoking around all infants and children, and in particular those parents with premature infants.

Respectfully,



Norman Edelman, MD
Chief Medical Officer
American Lung Association

References:

- 1) Aligne C, Stoddard J. Tobacco and children. An economic evaluation of the medical effects of parental smoking. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 1997; 151:648–653
- 2) Bradley, Joseph P., Bacharier, Leonard B., Bonfiglio, JoAnn, Schechtman, Kenneth B., Strunk, Robert, Storch, Gregory, Castro, Mario. Severity of respiratory syncytial virus bronchiolitis is affected by cigarette smoke exposure and atopy. *Pediatrics* 2005 115: e7-e14.

As part of National Prematurity Awareness Month, this educational information is brought to you by the American Lung Association and MedImmune