

February 25, 2014



The Informer

Message From The President

As we begin our new year and we look towards the future of the CWFC organization there are many exciting opportunities that will present themselves to all members. I'd like to tell you about one of those opportunities today.

The CWFC Board Members are strongly dedicated to the CWFC goals and mission. Many of the board members donate a large amount of their 'free time' to encourage the continued success of the organization. The level of commitment required to be an active board member is immense. The Board has made a minimum of a one year committed promise that we will serve all CWFC members to the best of our ability. This is a responsibility that we all take very seriously. Being truly committed means that even when the going gets tough, when we fall onto hard-

ships and our true character gets tested, that we rely on each other to get through the moment, continue marching on, never quit and remember the true reason that we asked to be part of this amazing organization. That reason is you.

I would like to encourage members to take an active role in defining CWFC's future. Most of you have received an e-mail indicating that CWFC is looking for engaged talent to serve on the Board in the upcoming 2014/2015 year. We are well aware of the level of dedication, talent, and drive that our members have and we would love to hear from you if you are interested in pursuing a Board and/or Officer position for the upcoming year. This is a very rewarding experience and it truly offers you growth opportunities both personally and professionally. I en-



courage you to feed your passion for maintaining and promoting integrity by joining the CWFC Board. If you have served before, consider returning. If you have not served before and would like more information about the responsibilities of Board / Officer positions or would like to volunteer please send an e-mail to our Board / Officer chair, Mark Magnuson, at Mag-nusma@co.weld.co.us and he will provide you with answers to your questions or place your name on our roster for possible Board Members for 2014/2015.

I believe that with your help, the CWFC organization can continue to evolve into an organization that continually improves and offers the best possible resources for our members.

Bridget Convey
CWFC President

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Remembering Ron Rice 1946-2014

CWFC lost a dedicated person last month: Ron Rice.

Ron was the president of CWFC in 1987-1988. His dedication to the organization lasted throughout the years. He was instrumental at the state level in maintaining program integrity in the Food Stamp program. Ron was passionate about ensuring that the

assistance went to eligible people who needed it most. Ron was also involved in the rollout of the EBT program and the implementation of Food Stamps into CBMS.

Ron is remembered for his sense of humor and compassion for the clients he helped to serve. He will be missed by many.



Conference!

Dear Fellow CWFC Members,

As the new year begins, we are hard at work organizing our 30th Annual Training Conference. I have spoken to many presenters and we are making progress for what I hope will be the best conference you have attended! I would like to ask again that any members who have any recommendations or suggestions for the upcoming conference to email me at

tammy.frey@state.co.us.

We have spent time going over each conference's evaluations as that is the best gauge we have for what our members like and dislike, but there is no measure like direct opinions. We will be meeting with the hotel's catering staff in the next couple of weeks to see if we can keep costs down without compromising quality. The Marriott will be coming up with a unique beverage just for our conference, so if you have any suggestions, please let us know.

Thank you for all your support!

Tammy Frey
President-Elect

EBT And Fraud

Identification of fraud is accomplished by looking at many different pieces of information. Some of that information can be identified through reports generated from the Electronic Benefits Transfer system (EBTS).

The State EBT office generates an Excessive Card Replacement report on a quarterly basis. Clients that have replaced their EBT card four or more times within a twelve month period appear on this report. A letter is sent to these clients notifying them that their card replacement activity is being monitored. The clients are reminded that the misuse or trafficking of their EBT card can result in penalties of varying severity. In addition the clients are offered assistance in managing their card. The counties are sent a list of the clients that have been mailed these letters. No action is

Greed

Greed: noun \ 'grēd\ : a selfish desire to have more of something (especially money).

Merriam-Webster...meet Greeley Gal*. Greeley Gal - 63 years old, SSI recipient, 1634 Medicaid recipient, Food Stamp recipient, divorced from Greeley Guy* in 2002.

Greeley Guy passed away in August, 2013. He was 81 years old at the time of death and worked full-time until he was 80 years old.

Two weeks after his death, Greeley Gal applied through the Greeley Social Security Administration

currently required by the counties but speaking points have been communicated to each county for calls received from clients as a result of this letter. So far these letters have created a decline in card replacement. We are hoping that once we cycle through four quarters of this process we will see a significant decrease in the number of card replacement activity. This procedure has been adopted by several states nationwide.

The State EBT office also reviews two retailer reports, Rapid/Repeated Transactions and Redemption of Entire Benefits reports. These two reports identify large dollar (\$200 or greater) transactions in three minutes or less and redemption of the entire clients' benefits in one transaction at convenience and small grocery stores. These reports are reviewed and suspicious activity is noted

and forwarded on to USDA/FNS for their investigation.

The EBT program also has access to a data warehouse system housed within the JP Morgan EBT Web Admin system. If your county is in need of EBT card deposit and transaction information that is older than what can be viewed, please submit an archive request to the State EBT office by contacting Bugi.Perrone@state.co.us or Patricia.Heese@state.co.us. A report can be created showing this information from November, 2006 to present. If the information requested is older than November, 2006, a request will be made by the State EBT office to JP Morgan. Retrieval of this older information can take two or more weeks, so please submit your request as early as possible if needed for a court case.

Mark Magnuson

office for Survivor benefits claiming to be Greeley Guy's wife.

In the eight years that she received SSI, Medicaid, and Food Assistance, she declared herself to be divorced or single. Not once during those years did she declare to be married. If she had declared herself to be married to Greeley Guy, she would not have been eligible for SSI (due to his income) and therefore would not have been eligible for any Medicaid benefits, nor would she have been eligible for Food Stamps. Well, you can't have it both ways,

Greeley Gal. Either you were married to Greeley Guy and are therefore eligible for Survivor benefits, or you weren't married to Greeley Guy and remain eligible for SSI benefits.

Greeley Gal eventually and begrudgingly confessed that she and Greeley Guy got back together in 2004 and declared themselves to be married one to another and presented themselves as common-law married since then. She was even listed as his surviving wife in his published obituary!

Continued on page 3

Trish Heese

Another One Bites The Dust

There once was a business operated by Paul Acuna, and people were dying to become his clients. It is this business that was the focus of a 2011/2012 investigation of Weld County Department of Human Services as we had received information that Paul was exceeding the \$2,500.00 State cap on funeral and cremation services in order to receive burial assistance. That business was Paul Acuna's Funeral Home in Greeley, Colorado.

We reviewed about 100 services that Paul had performed from 2010 to mid 2012. Within each of these mini investigations we had to review the applications from the families that had applied for assistance, the invoices from Paul provided to the County and we had to get the actual invoices from each of those services that some family member had received from Paul Acuna. As you can imagine, locating the invoices that Paul had

provided the families was the most difficult aspect of this investigation, not to mention contacting the family members about such a delicate subject as some of the deceased were children.

Paul had provided forged invoices to the County where he showed the services were under or at the \$2,500.00 State cap for burial assistance. Copies of the original invoices supplied to the families were matched against the invoices provided to the County, and we discovered 14 cases where the families were billed more than \$2,500.00, thus exceeding program guidelines. At the advice of a County Attorney, the case was turned over to the Greeley Police Department. About the same time, we had learned that Paul was closing his business and moving out of state. Search Warrants were issued for the business, and computers were seized. Soon after our case was assigned to a Detec-

tive, he started to get complaints about the same person selling prepaid funeral services. The Detective discovered that Paul was not licensed or insured to sell prepaid funerals, and when the business closed, those funds were not refunded or transferred to another funeral home. During a police interview with Paul Acuna, Paul admitted that he had submitted at least 50 forged invoices over the years to DHS.

The DHS case went to trial, and a jury found Paul guilty of 13 felony counts of Forgery and 1 count of felony Theft for more than \$13,000.00. A week later, Paul pled guilty on the pre-paid case. At a lengthy sentencing hearing, Paul was sentenced to 2 years Department of Corrections (DOC) for the DHS case and 10 years DOC for the prepaid case for a total of 12 years prison. At the time of this writing, restitution has not been ordered.

Mark Magnuson



*Be sure to recognize
your colleagues for
their excellent work
in fraud detection
and prevention!
See the nomination
form on page 5.*

Greed *(cont. from page 2)*

This resulted in a \$68,188.00 overpayment through the SSA, a \$165,851.60 overpayment through Medicaid and a \$3,548.00 overpayment in Food Assistance. And...she is facing felony charges.

We would have been none the wiser had greed not gotten hold of Greeley Gal, who wanted a little more cash than she received in her monthly SSI payment.

**Names have been protected due to an open court case.*

Board Members Wanted!



We are seeking interested parties to serve on the board of CWFC!

Do you want to make a difference and have a voice in the new direction and challenges CWFC will face in the future? Would you like to see changes made to current state statutes or program rules? Would you like to participate in training investigators and eligibility staff throughout the state?

If so, volunteering your time to serve on the board of CWFC is the right job for you!

The website, www.cwfc.us, has information on board meeting times and locations, in addition to the various committees with which the board and officers are involved.

If you are interested, contact Mark Magnuson at Magnuma@co.weld.co.us.

CWFC Memberships for 2014 are now being accepted

The Colorado Welfare Fraud Council has been in existence since 1984 and is still going strong! Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the officers, board and general membership over the years, the Council has been able to maintain a strong presence in human services agencies throughout the state. There are currently over 140 members of CWFC and we want to add to that number for 2014! I encourage you to share information about our organization with others and help the Membership Committee increase our numbers. The annual dues remain an affordable \$20.00 per year.

CWFC memberships cover the year from January 1st through December 31st. The membership affords you access to the CWFC newsletter, *The Informer*, and the website www.cwfc.us. In addition, you'll have access to the Council's resources to support you in maintaining program integrity and the fight against welfare fraud.

Please be sure to spread the word about CWFC and all of the good work our members do every day to detect, investigate and prosecute those guilty of welfare fraud!

Sincerely,

Shawn Southard-Nielsen

Vice-President and Membership Committee Chair, CWFC, 2013-2014

Please print legibly and complete membership form in its entirety

2014 CWFC Membership Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Agency: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

New Member Returning Member Renewal Change of Contact Information Only

Please make checks payable to CWFC and mail with this completed membership form to:

CWFC, P.O. Box 890, Canon City, CO 81215

Please report any changes to your contact information as soon as possible



Award Nomination Form

Nominees need not be CWFC members

(Check only one per nomination)

_____ *Ted Cole Memorial Award*

This award recognizes an individual or group who demonstrated excellence in performance that enhances the general principles and goals of the CWFC, public relations, positive contribution to newsletter, legislation, or other printed forums that relate to preventing public assistance fraud and the promotion of the CWFC.

_____ *Outstanding Group or Individual of the Year*

This award recognizes an individual or group of individuals who have made an important contribution and/or a major impact in the prevention, detection, prosecution, and recovery of fraudulently obtained public assistance within the last year.

_____ *Prosecutor of the Year*

This award recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution and/or shown excellence in the prosecution of fraud.

_____ *Income Maintenance Tech, Eligibility Worker, or Case Manager of the Year*

This award recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution and/or demonstrates excellence in the prevention of public assistance or food assistance fraud.

_____ *Recovery, Legal, Investigative Tech of the Year*

This award recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution and/or demonstrates excellence in the recovery of public assistance or food assistance fraud.

_____ *Investigator of the Year*

This award includes all Investigators from local, state and federal levels. It recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution and/or exhibited excellence in the investigation of fraud and program abuse.

Nominee: _____

Reason for Nomination- please attach your nomination on department letterhead

Your Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Fax or Email nominations to Shawn Southard-Nielsen or any Awards Committee member by April 30, 2014.

Fax: 719.520.6957

Email: shawnsouthard@elpasoco.com