

2023 Quarter 2 Newsletter



Summer Safety for Seniors and People with Disabilities

Getting out and having fun in the sun is always one of the exciting parts of summer, but for aging adults, those activities can be dangerous without taking the proper precautions. This is especially true for those days of extreme heat and high UV index. While the tips we give below are far from comprehensive, it certainly provides a good starting point for seniors and people with disabilities to consider before engaging in those outdoor activities this summer.

Wear sunscreen – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Less than half of older adults protect their skin from the sun when outside for an hour or more on a warm sunny day. This may raise their risk of getting skin cancer. Most cases of skin cancer are found in people older than 65 years of age.” A broad-spectrum sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher, reapplied throughout the day, will help mitigate your risk for skin cancer.

Get rest – Make sure to take frequent breaks to go inside an air-conditioned building to get some rest and drink some water, especially if you begin feeling tired and dehydrated. If your home does not have air conditioning, reach out to your health department or Area Agency on Aging to see where there may be air-conditioned shelters located in your area. Other options to remain indoors include a friend’s house, a library, a shopping mall, the senior center, a religious organization, and much more.

Stay hydrated – The CDC recommends that you increase the amount of fluids you drink when it’s hot outside, and to not wait until you’re thirsty to drink. If your doctor has you on a fluid limitation or water pills, ask them how much you should drink during hot weather. You can also have drinks that contain a high number of electrolytes to help keep you hydrated.

Take advantage of summer fruits and vegetables – Enjoy the delicious fruits and vegetables in season. Some fruits and vegetables that might be nice to enjoy this summer include apples, avocados, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, carrots, cucumbers, lemons, limes, mangoes, okra, peaches, strawberries, tomatoes, watermelon, zucchini, and much more. To see a full list of fruits and vegetables that are typically in season during the summer, visit the United States Department of Agriculture website at <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide>.



CEO Corner



Early on in my career at Palco, an elderly mother of an adult child with severe Downs' syndrome said something that has stuck with me for almost two decades, "How will I protect my child after I pass away?" At the time, I didn't have kids, and frankly, was unsure of how best to respond. But, I could feel her distress, and it has become a guiding moment for me. Oftentimes, people ask me what Palco does, and I tell them we are a service company. Sure, we process payroll, handle enrollments, and offer support coordination. All of those activities are things we should be good at. It's not what sets us apart. What sets us apart is remembering people like that mother. As a mother myself, I understand her concern even more clearly today. Every day, when we are working on new solutions and strategies, I put myself in the shoes of those we serve. If one of my children had a disability, and I am struggling to find workers, what would I want Palco to do to make enrollment easier on me? I am proud that Palco asks these questions and has never lost its North Star. It's my goal to always bring us back to the core of what we do. It's not our goal to dictate to people how to live their lives, but it is our goal to listen to their needs and do our best to solve them. And who knows? You may find inspiration for years to come by listening.



Arkansas

Support Coordination team works together to help Arkansans



The Support Coordination (SC) department truly embodies the saying, "There is no I in 'team.'" The last several months have been some of the most challenging and difficult the team has faced, yet through it all, they have persevered. The team has gone above and beyond to ensure each participant, employer, and caregiver has the training, tools, and knowledge to carry out the core traits of self-direction: independence and autonomy in care. Everyone on the SC

team strives for the success of the SC team. It's not about caseloads or counties or how far away someone is, it's about being there to answer difficult questions, or to offer advice, or to provide a funny story to help get us through the day. But mostly it's about carrying each other and stepping up and stepping in and being available to lean on each other and press forward to provide the best service we can for the participants in Arkansas.

Pennsylvania

Conference in the Commonwealth

In May, Palco attended the Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA) conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania. There, the team had a chance to collaborate with others around the self-direction community in Pennsylvania by sharing ideas, celebrating independence, and brainstorming with like-minded individuals in the industry. Palco was also able to host individuals in its new interactive exhibitor booth that allows people to voice their thoughts on what independence means to them. For more details about Palco's participation in the conference, see the "Palco in the Community" section on the last page.

As Pennsylvania and the Office of Developmental Programs closes out another fiscal year, Palco is proud to be a dedicated partner to the Commonwealth and see the recertification of service authorizations coming through. All new 7/1 budgets are processed and in the Palco system. If you have any questions, speak to a service coordinator or the Palco customer support team. Check out the System Features Spotlight for more information about new tools and resources that have been added to Connect which will greatly benefit Pennsylvania stakeholders!

Kansas

KS Work program gets new Connect Features

Palco Connect has a new feature for KS Work program participants / employers! This new feature gives participants and employers the ability to view the participant's current carry over fund balance.

After logging into Connect, the participant or employer will click on the icon that appears at the top right-hand corner of the screen next to the Spending tab. After clicking on the icon, choose Period Spending from the drop-down list. Next, choose the service dates you would like to view and click Submit.

To correctly view the carry over funds, the service dates you enter must be within the current budget period. Once you enter the service dates, a utilization screen will appear. Participants and employers should make sure that the Allocation Type is displaying funds (instead of units). This will allow the Carry Over Fund balance and utilization to properly display on the utilization screen.

For more information on how to navigate Palco Connect and view carry over funds, KS WORK participants and employers should check out the Palco Connect User Guide located here: <https://palcofirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/EVV-Connect-User-Guide-GEN.pdf>.

Sunflower staff and ILCs can view carry over funds in Palco's Case Management Portal. Additional information For more information on how to view Carry Over Funds in CMP, check out the CMP General User Guide located on the Palco website as follows: <https://palcofirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/CMP-General-User-Guide.pdf>. Appendix K of the CMP General User Guide includes information specific to the KS WORK program.

Additional resources for the KS WORK program can be found at <https://palcofirst.com/programs/kansas/>.



Employee Spotlight Taylor Johnson Payroll Manager

Tell us a little about yourself:

I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas and have lived here my whole life. I got my bachelor's at the University of Central Arkansas and have been working at Palco for almost four years.

What is your role at Palco?

I started out in data entry before being promoted to a payroll processing position and was later promoted to Payroll Manager. I oversee a team of seven processors who run validations and process payroll for their assigned programs.

What are your hobbies?

My hobbies are mostly indoor hobbies such as watching TV or listening to music. I come from a cat-crazy family that has rubbed off on me as I currently have five cats. The oldest is a twenty-year-old Persian who is still going strong!

What makes Palco's payroll department different?

The payroll processing team works well together and are cross trained on different programs so they can cover for each other while someone takes PTO.

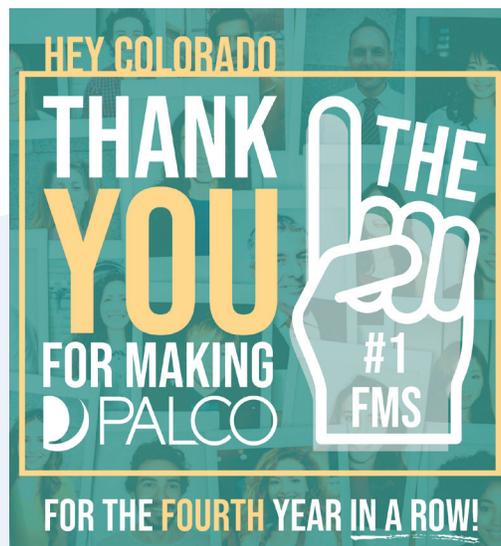
Colorado

Palco named number one FMS in the state for the fourth year in a row

For the fourth year in a row, you have made Palco the number one ranked FMS in Colorado! Thanks to all participants who took the time to complete the survey. We appreciate all of you very much and look forward to continuing to serve your FMS needs.

Palco just completed a huge project for the 7/1 revision on all participant budgets. A big thank you to the Palco FMS staff and to external case managers. We appreciate all the hard work that went into this. We also want to thank staff at HCPF for the enhancements they made to their system to make this process smoother for everyone involved. We've also been working on the 2023 Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) exemption renewal project. Thank you to our dedicated enrollment staff for working to get them all processed and to the CDASS members and attendants for getting your form turned in by the deadline.

Visit our website for other news and helpful resources: <https://palcofirst.com/colorado/>





Nevada

Nevada Self-Funded program sees budget increase and new maximum allowable wage

Palco implemented several changes to the NV SF program for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Beginning 7/1/2023, each active participant realized a budget increase from \$650 to \$679 per month. This new monthly budget applies to any services on or after 7/1/2023. As a reminder, unused monthly budget funds do not roll over to the next month.

In addition, a maximum allowable wage has been set for this program for all non-professional workers effective 7/1/2023. The new maximum allowable wage is \$20.00 which means non-professional workers hired by program participants or their designated employer cannot be paid more than \$20/hr. Support Coordinators from the Regional Centers are contacting employers who have a worker with a higher rate in order to discuss this change and obtain a new Pay Rate Information

form stipulating the worker's new pay rate. A worker's pay rate must be at least minimum wage (\$11.25 as of 7/1/2023) and the new maximum allowable wage of \$20. The Pay Rate Information form must be signed by the worker and the employer. As a reminder, please make sure that all NV SF vendors are using the updated Vendor Payment Request packet that is located on the Palco website at https://palcofirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Vendor_Pymt_Req_PKT_NV.pdf. A helpful tip sheet is included with this packet to assist vendors with filling out the required forms. Please make sure all vendors are utilizing this packet and following the helpful tips provided on the tip sheet.

For any questions regarding the above, please contact your Support Coordinator or the Regional Center.



New Mexico

Introducing Money Network Card

One major improvement made for New Mexico this quarter includes the implementation of Money Network Card (MNC) payments for Employers of Record (EORs). The implementation of this new payment method was a goal of New Mexico self-directed Medicaid for over a decade. Over the years, policies had been implemented by some vendors that made checks from the FMS less viable. Suppliers began requiring that checks be run through Telecheck without manual entry. This caused members to find their checks

regularly rejected. With the introduction of the MNC for EORs, this problem has been alleviated. Vendors that do not accept checks, such as Amazon, can now be added to a budget and their goods purchased. Any vendor that accepts Visa or Mastercard is available to address the member's needs. Additionally, the delay of waiting for a check to arrive or be replaced if lost in transit or after receipt is no longer an issue. EORs now are able to fulfill their member's needs with the ease of a debit card.

Ohio

A year of improvements and an extended partnership

The Ohio Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio (COA) staff and Palco staff have worked hand-in-hand for the past year improving communications and fine-tuning processes to cut down the time it takes to get a participant enrolled and active on the program. Both parties have been willing to adapt to new processes and accept when things don't seem to be working to better the program for our members. We have also seen many improvements with accounts once active in the program, including the number of users who have switched from paper timesheets to using either the Connect system or the newly added AddnAide application for reviewing and approving timesheets. During the second pay period after the transition took place, 56 percent of timesheets were submitted using paper timesheets, putting a huge strain on the Payroll Processing team since those must be keyed manually. In a recent service period, the number of paper timesheets has dropped down to 39 percent. These improvements not only help relieve some manual processes from our internal staff, but also help cut down the number of workers having time denied and the

amount of calls being received by COA asking for assistance in correcting their time and understanding the denial.

Looking into improving the future processes, COA will be trying something new this month to hopefully expedite the process of Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) checks. This will be done by providing a mobile clinic at one of their home offices, allowing workers to complete their BCI checks same day without setting an appointment and going to a traditional BCI check office. There are two clinics being held at the end of June through the beginning of July as a trial run to decide if this is something from which members and their potential workers would benefit. Palco staff plan to be present at these clinics as well to assist the COA staff in any way needed.

We have seen many accomplishments serving as the Elderly Services Program FMS vendor this last year and we are proud to announce that COA has signed their first five-year FMS contract to continue working alongside Palco. We look forward to continue working along side this innovative program.

Please pay close attention to email communications from Palco. We often provide time sensitive and important program information to you in those email communications.



Mark's Mail

Dear Mark,

What are the key components of good customer service in the FMS industry?

Answer:

The components of a good customer service team consist of creating best practices to help the company develop highly effective processes to streamline the work. Having the ability and knowledge to respond immediately to the client's needs allows the caller's issues to be resolved quickly and efficiently. Knowledge of Self-Direction is needed to create effective communication when a client is working through a specific situation. You want someone on the other end of the line that understands your issue and is empathetic to your needs. Palco is proud that 100% of our calls are answered by a live agent and we have a 95% call resolution rate, a stark contrast to our competitors. For more information on what makes customer service so important and how Palco sets itself apart by top tier customer service, visit palcofirst.com/quality-customer-service-matters.

COMING SOON

TO A SELF-DIRECTION PROGRAM NEAR YOU

43 | 1890



System Feature Spotlight

Connect Self Service

Last month Palco deployed a few new self-service tools for Employers and Workers to access within the Connect system. Users now have the ability to update Palco with key information such as changes to their contact information and updates to their preferred location for direct deposit. This simplified process ensures a quick and seamless mechanism for notifying Palco of changes at any time, day or night. Changes to updates must be made by the timesheet submission deadline for that pay cycle in order to take effect for that payroll. Additionally, Connect now contains an interface for users to monitor vendor payment requests when applicable. Later in 2023, users will gain access to new screens that allow for the online submission of vendor payment requests just like timesheets.

As a reminder, Connect is the main portal for all Employer and Worker needs. More than just

time entry and approvals, Connect contains valuable reports for Employers to properly direct and manage their services and utilization as well as paystubs for all workers. If you have any questions about how to navigate Connect and access these valuable resources, you can find training documentation on the program specific webpage on the Palco First site.

Profile

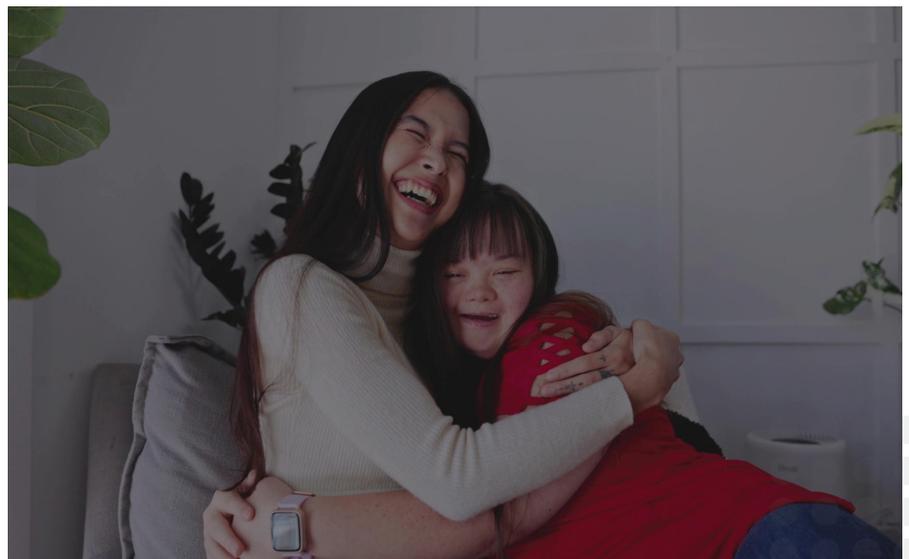
<input type="checkbox"/> MAKE CHANGES	
Phone 1:	(111) 111-1111
Phone 2:	
Email:	kelly.l@arpalco.33mail.com
Mailing Address	Physical Address

Conclusion

The most dangerous phrase in language is, we've always done it this way.

- Grace Hopper

In order to evolve and remain in line with a vision that produces results and quality care, Palco has continued to modernize our technology to meet the demands of the self-directed marketplace. **Click on the accompanying video** to see just what we mean and how we have embraced change to help better serve our participants and their caregivers.



<https://palcofirst.com/think-palco-first/>

Important Dates

July 28

Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

August 7-9
Orlando, FL

**Florida Conference on Aging
Booth #114**

August
27-31
Baltimore,
MD

**HCBS Conference
Table 3 in the Heron, Galena,
and Falkland Rooms**

September
18-22
Idaho

Palco Idaho Roadshow

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866.710.0456
www.palcofirst.com



**Palco
in the
Community**

In May 2023, the Palco team attended the Pennsylvania Homecare Association Conference in Hershey, PA. We met homecare agencies, homecare support staff, Managed Care Organizations, as well as self-direction and homecare service advocates. Our team had a great time making lasting connections, providing information about Palco's system and services, and expanding the Palco brand. Our new interactive booth provides attendees an opportunity to engage and answer the question, What Does Independence Mean To You? This fundamental question is the core and heart of Palco's business and service delivery. Focused on empowering independence for the people we serve, it's a critical measure to slow down and reflect on what you want your life to look like as you age or health circumstances change. Knowing what independence means to YOU can help ensure service systems are built with person centered approaches resulting in more meaningful lives.

Photo above (from left): Mark Biviano, COO; Alicia Paladino, CEO; Heather Nash, Account Manager; Logan Smith, Account Manager