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**Orientation for New PCAs – What’s Going On?**

If you use the Stavros PCA program, you’ve probably gotten a letter from our Fiscal Intermediary about an orientation program for your newly-hired Personal Care Attendants (PCAs). Here’s a quick guide to what you need to know.

**Where is this coming from?** The Quality Workforce Council. This group is appointed by the Governor, has a majority of PCA consumers, and works with SEIU, Local 1199 (the PCA’s union) to protect and improve the program.

**What’s the orientation about?** This is a way to make sure that all new PCAs learn the basics of the program: consumer control, independent living philosophy, safety precautions, fraud, and their rights under the law.

**Do all new PCAs have to get this orientation?** Yes.

**But doesn’t that mean I lose control over my program?** No. You’re still the one who chooses your PCAs, who tells them what they need to do and how they need to do it. **And** you can do the orientation yourself if you want.

**Okay how do I do that?** If you want to do the orientation yourself, call the Stavros Fiscal Intermediary (1.800.442.1185) and let them know. They will mail you a Consumer Options Form if you don’t have one. Fill it out and return to the FI. We’ll make sure you get an Orientation Packet from the “Homecare Training Benefit” (that’s the group organizing the trainings).

**What can you say about the group orientation sessions?** The three-hour sessions are offered at different locations around the state. Your PCA can call **1.877.409.8283** to find out about the when and where of sessions near them and to sign up to attend.

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**Who's going to pay for this?** The state will pay the PCAs for the three hours they spend in orientation. It won't come out of your PCA hours, and they will get reimbursed for the time!

**How long does my PCA have to make this happen?** Your PCA has six months from her or his hire date.

**What happens if they don't?** This is the bad part! PCAs who don't complete the orientation within six months will see their wages go down by two dollars an hour until they get it done.

**Wow – that doesn't seem fair. What's the point of this?** There's a lot of concern among our state legislators about possible abuse and fraud in the PCA program. The orientation provides safeguards to make sure PCAs know about these issues, while learning about consumer control and independent living philosophy. Six months is a lot of time: support your PCAs to get this done!

If you have any other questions about the New Hire Orientation, call your Stavros skills trainer or Member Services at **1.800.804.1899**.



## Accessible 9-1-1

If you have an emergency, it's important to know that 9-1-1 works even if you can't or aren't able to speak! When you have an emergency and dial 911 you can:

Press 1 if you need police

Press 2 if you need the fire department

Press 3 if you need an ambulance.

If the dispatcher asks you questions, 4 means "yes" and 5 means "no."

**You do not have to remember these numbers!** The operator will ask you these questions and then can see on a screen which numbers you have pressed. Remember: if you can't talk you can still get help!!

## #Advocacyworks

Since January Stavros has gone to the State House three times to educate legislators about the needs of people with disabilities. We have asked for your help through our website, E- news, Facebook page, and twitter feed to join us. We know many of you can't make it to Boston. Don't worry: your calls are critical in our efforts to make independent living possible for people with disabilities.



Your calls and our visits educated legislators about the Personal Care Attendant Program. When budget cuts threatened PCA services we explained how this program can make the difference between life and death – and save money! We asked you to call and you did! And today we can say that **for now** the Personal Care Attendant Program is protected.

We also worked with Deaf and hard of hearing consumers to write letters and went to the State House to ask them not to cut services. So far so good: the House budget increases funding for Deaf and hard of hearing folks. We have also called our legislators to protect independent living services and Housing for people with disabilities. Thanks for your support on these important

issues.

Without your help making calls or emailing your legislators we could lose important services to people with disabilities. So please visit our website, get our e news or follow us on social media. Be alert to possible funding cuts to services and be ready to call your legislators. Advocacy works when you take action!

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## File your complaint online

The American with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990 to protect people with disabilities against discrimination. 25 years later, we're still being treated differently! Discrimination may occur at a restaurant, store, government building or public place. It can be as simple as having no accessible entrance at a government building or as complicated as being denied a job due to your disability.

If you think you've been discriminated against, you can call, mail or fax your complaint. And now you can "e-file". You can complete your complaint online by going to <http://www.ada.gov/complaint/> . Filers will also immediately receive a "reference number" that can be used whenever you contact the U. S. Department of Justice about that complaint.

You can still call or even use your video phone if you are deaf. The ADA Information Line is **1-800-514-0301 (v) or 1-800-514-0383 (tty)**: they'll send you a paper complaint form by mail. For more information on how to file or to find out more about the ADA you can visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) .

## Is your APARTMENT Accessible?

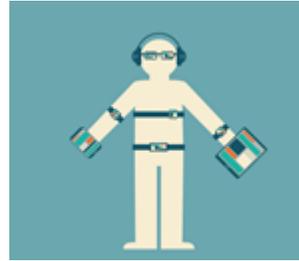
Have problems getting around or using your apartment? Your landlord may be required to make improvements. We have a new Fact Sheet on how to request accommodations from your landlord! Call at 1-800-804-1899 ext 216 or visit our website at [www.stavros.org](http://www.stavros.org) for your

**FREE Fact sheet and get more independent!**



## YOU HAVE OPTIONS !!!

Are you trying to figure out for yourself or someone you care about what services are out there to help you remain as independent as possible? Our Options Counseling Program could be what you need to help you make the right decision for you. Contact Stavros at **413-256-0473 or 1-800-804-1899 ext. 201**. [Back to the top](#)



## Is Wearable tech for You?

We have Google glasses, smart watches, Fitbit – and here's the cool thing. Some of this wearable technology can make our lives better as persons with disabilities.

In an ever-changing world we need to start looking at technology and think these aren't just medical devices. No – these are things that everyone is using and how can we make use of them to better our lives?

Google glasses are helping people with mobility disabilities navigate the web and take pictures. GPS technologies are helping adult children of parents with Alzheimer's keep track of their whereabouts. Fitness trackers can be controlled by cell phones and are a viable option for people using wheelchairs to track movement and sleep patterns. I-Phone apps can now control digital hearing aids.

Of course there is more complicated technology out there. Like Maysam Ghovanloo at Georgia Tech, who has developed a tongue piercing device that is empowering people with high-level spinal cord injuries to control their computers, wheelchairs and phones – all with their tongues. Why the tongue? Partly because they found that the tongue doesn't tire as fast as other body parts, and also because most people, regardless of disability, can still move their tongues.

Before you jump on the bandwagon of wearable technology (or any other technology), ask yourself: how is this going to benefit me? Are there more cost effective technologies? Who is going to train me to use this? Can I try before I buy? What is the warrantee or return policy? Who can do repairs and what's the turnaround time? Will I use it? If you can answer all these questions satisfactorily, then go ahead get your wearable technology – and make your fashion statement!

## THE GIFT OF GIVING



Advocating, creating opportunities for people with disabilities to be independent, helping people live at home by building ramps, providing support for teens with disabilities to plan for their future: these are some of the things Stavros does to make independent living possible in our communities. Please consider supporting our work by **sending a donation to: Stavros, 210 Old Farm Road, Amherst MA 01002**

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# CELEBRATIONS-YOUR STORY-GET INVOLVED

## CELEBRATE the PROMISE

This year is the **25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Help us celebrate this great law for persons with disabilities. We are back at the **Amherst Town Common**, with great fun and entertainment.

**September 19, 2015**

**11 am to 4pm**

**ATTENTION!**



**artist and crafters with disabilities: for your free space call us at 1-800-804-1899 ext. 200.**

Non-profits & businesses: you may reserve your space too! Call us for pricing.

## STORIES Wanted

We are looking for YOUR story. How did the ADA CHANGE your life? Did the ADA make your life better? How? Want to share your story? E mail Angelina @

**[aramirez@stavros.org](mailto:aramirez@stavros.org)**

## Transportation

Is PVTA transportation a problem for you? If so we'd love to have you join Stavros in advocating for more reliable public transportation. If interested, please contact **Basil at 413-781-5555 ext 318** to join the committee.

## HOUSING

A good place to live is hard to find. And if we can't afford it or are trying to make it accessible because of our disabilities, well, that's even harder. Find out how to find& keep an accessible place to live at our monthly housing workshop. Call Jim Wolejko at **413-256-0473 ext 216.**



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