

Dignity

The Newsletter for Homecare Workers Local 99

SEIU Local 503, OPEU

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What every homecare worker should know about Natural Supports

Wilma South, a Klamath Falls homecare worker, provided in-home services to her elderly mother, Dora Casey, for 3 years. When Dora was discharged from the hospital after breaking a hip, she was not able to recuperate at home, so Wilma brought her mother home. Wilma was denied a relative foster home license. The branch office told her "we don't license relative foster homes anymore". Not true. The legislature contemplated ending relative foster home program, but they never did, partially based on union members' intense lobby efforts.

After 2 months, Dora was able to resume living on her own and moved into a house next door and Wilma reapplied to resume being her paid caregiver. Wilma was asked during the intake process, "Dora is your mother. Wouldn't you help her even if you weren't getting paid?" Wilma replied "Yes, of course I would?" Based on that question and answer, the Klamath Falls Branch of Senior Services denied Wilma's mother's request for paid homecare services because Wilma was a natural support.

"It was a trick question" Wilma said. "My mother had to appeal the denial

in August and we just received a favorable ruling from the judge. I still don't know if I'll get paid back wages for the time I cared for my mother while we were going through this whole process."

The DHS policy on Natural Supports (411-030-0040) says that "...payments for in-home support services are not intended to replace the resources available to a client from their natural support system of relatives, friends, and neighbors. Payment ...can be authorized only when such resources are not available, not sufficient, or cannot be developed to adequately meet the needs of the client."

When your client is being assessed or reassessed for services, family, friends or neighbors who are acting as "natural supports", need to have a clearly stated position on what they would be willing to do free of charge, if anything, and what their expectation are in terms of being paid for services you provide to your client. If you believe that "natural supports" have been misinterpreted or arbitrarily assigned, talk with your client about asking for a re-assessment of the care plan or ask for a hearing by calling the branch office.



Dora Casey with daughter and caregiver Wilma South, Klamath Falls