

Tackling Medicaid Fraud and Abuse

By Rep. Joe Emrick

BANGOR - In an effort to ensure taxpayer dollars are helping people truly in need and not being used fraudulently or misspent, a bipartisan group of lawmakers this week unveiled a comprehensive package of bills to stop fraud and abuse within the state's Medicaid program.

The package of bills is the direct result of a grand jury report on fraud in Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance Program, also known as Medicaid, released by the Office of Attorney General and a report recently released by the House Government Oversight Committee.

The measures would create a state version of the federal False Claims Act to recoup additional funds from false claims made against Medicaid; require state agencies to assess their program expenditures to determine how susceptible they are to improper payment; create a state-level Do Not Pay system to stop improper payments before they are made; require requirements for contracts with Medicaid Managed Care Organizations; and increase penalties for fraudulent claims.

Every Medicaid dollar that is improperly spent is a dollar taken away from those who benefit in earnest from the program. I am proud to support these efforts in order to eliminate the waste that results from fraud and abuse of our Medical Assistance Program.



Bangor Area School District

Slater Standout of the Month Award



Mr. Steve Villiano



Mrs. Amy Gravel

Mr. Steve Villiano has worked in the district for 17 years. For the past 10 years, Steve has been the head custodian at Washington Elementary. Steve is efficient, gets to everything immediately, and has a work ethic that suggests "nothing is impossible." When the third and fourth grade teams merged into one building this school year, he made sure that the teachers had everything they needed. One example of this is when there were no desks or bookshelves in one of the classrooms, and a second teacher was looking for a filing cabinet. Mr. Villiano provided these items almost immediately. He does his job with a smile on his face, a kind word for everyone, and a positive, cheerful attitude. Most importantly, the students know and love him. Mr. Villiano goes above and beyond his daily duties and exemplifies the meaning of a Slater Standout recipient.

Mrs. Amy Gravel is a kindergarten teacher at Five Points. Mrs. Gravel began her career at Bangor in 2003. Mrs. Gravel's career is truly a model for others. Mrs. Gravel demonstrates great dedication tirelessly working to ensure that all of her kindergarten students reach the highest possible level of success. The learning data of her students consistently demonstrates her ability to get her students to reach and exceed grade level standards. Mrs. Gravel never gives up on a student and this is seen in her remarkable ability to help her students achieve success. Beyond helping her students academically succeed, Mrs. Gravel also works with students to help them develop the social and emotional skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond. Mrs. Gravel truly takes a whole learner approach when working with her students. Mrs. Gravel is an incredibly hardworking and knowledgeable educator. Her leadership is quiet but steady. She is always willing to assist a colleague, share resources, or work with a student to help them make progress. She is the first to volunteer to check-in a student in the morning and review their day with them at the end of the day. Often these are not Mrs. Gravel's direct students, but students from throughout the building who need extra guidance and support. Mrs. Gravel has formally served as the grade level curriculum leader and she served in this role with a high level of dedication. Whether with the formal title of leader or not, Mrs. Gravel embodies all that a leader should. She has a clear understanding of what kindergarten students need to learn both in kindergarten and for success beyond kindergarten. Mrs. Gravel goes above and beyond to ensure that all kindergarten students master these skills. Mrs. Gravel has provided a great amount of leadership in the refining of our kindergarten program to help over 95% of students consistently end their kindergarten year on grade level! Mrs. Gravel is the utmost professional. Although she is too modest to admit it, Mrs. Gravel has so much professional work of which to be proud. Five Points is so lucky to have her on staff and all of our students and teachers benefit from her leadership, knowledge, dedication, and kindness.

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Ken Field
Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times
Rules of Thumb

We all need rules to live by and some rules are fine but are just really recommendations and not actual laws of the universe. Like the 2 second rule for driving. No matter what speed you are travelling you should leave a 2 second gap between you and the vehicle ahead of you. Or the 5 second rule for eating food that fell on the floor. Let's call them guidelines and let's keep them in perspective.

There are some rules that apply to heating a home and I believe they were made up by people who were too lazy to do math. The size of a heating unit that goes into a home is critical for proper operation and I rarely see one that is the correct size. I'd estimate that 95% of the systems I look at are grossly oversized. I probably was less conscious of it 25 years ago and back then the furnaces didn't come in very small output sizes like they do today. My real beef is with systems that are fully 100% too large for the area they heat and also too large for the amount of ducts or radiators that are connected to them. Obviously you wouldn't like it if your house couldn't stay warm when it got really cold outside so we design a system to keep it 68° inside when it is 10° outside. Then we round up to the closest system that is not smaller than the total capacity needed to achieve that. A typical 2 story home built since 1980 needs about 60,000 btus of energy on that design day. Why then would some put in a system that has well over twice that capacity? I have no clue but I see it all day every day. All that does is make the house uncomfortable and waste fuel. Sure it heats the house but it's like having a car with no gas pedal, just a screaming engine, and adjusting the speed of the car by shifting from neutral to drive and then back to neutral all day long. That would be insanity to drive and would waste a lot of fuel. Your mechanic would think you were out of your mind and wonder who came up with such a bad idea. Well that bad idea is installed in almost every basement I see. I can alter it slightly but I can't make it right until it is time to replace the furnace. So when that time comes, ask for some evidence that the math was done and you are getting the correct size unit for your home.

Ken Field is the owner of Field's Service, Inc. and Slate Belt Energy Services. He has over 40 years of experience in heating, air conditioning and is certificated by RESNET and BPI in various areas of energy conservation. He can be reached at 610-599-8832 or at www.SlateBeltEnergy.com

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Sarnoski Joins NJTPA Executive Board

By Art Charlton

WARREN COUNTY – Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski was elected Secretary of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) at its January 13 Board of Trustees meeting.

“I want to thank my fellow Board members for electing me to the Executive Committee,” Freeholder Sarnoski said. “The NJTPA plays an important role, coordinating regional transportation planning efforts and prioritizing funding while considering the needs a diverse region of urban, suburban and rural communities. The NJTPA has helped create a vision for a regional greenway that connects Warren County to Hudson County along the former Morris Canal and has funded important local efforts, including our recent update to the Warren County Transportation Technical Study,” he added.



The NJTPA oversees regional transportation planning and annually authorizes more than \$1 billion in federal surface transportation funding for 13 counties in northern and central New Jersey. The Executive Committee provides guidance and leadership to the full Board on a wide range of planning, policy and administrative issues. It meets as needed to review financial, personnel and policy matters. Board membership is an uncompensated position.

Sarnoski was elected to the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 2010 and joined the NJTPA Board of Trustees in 2011. This is his first time serving on the Board's Executive Committee. He most recently served as a member of the Planning & Economic Development Committee.

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