

Recognizing Outstanding Service Excellence



**Cathryn Sause, L.C.S.W.
Heart Transplant**

Debbie Lamberger from Ambulatory Services Administration submitted the following nomination. . .

Cathryn Sause is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with the Heart Transplant team within the Department of Clinical Transplant at OHSU. Cathryn returned to work, after several weeks off, to a patient in the ICU who was unfunded and had advanced heart failure. The medical team was distressed because this new unfunded patient with advanced heart failure was likely going to die within days, since no one had been able to get his Washington Medicaid application processed. This patients' heart failure was so advanced that his heart was no longer able to function without the support of continuous IV inotropic infusions. There are no charitable drug programs for this life sustaining drug and its cost is several thousands of dollars per month. In short, unless this man could be enrolled in Washington Medicaid in the next day or two he would be out of treatment options and looking at eminent death within hours or days of stopping the IV drugs. Cathryn sped into action by tracking down the various parts of the patients Medicaid application and speaking to workers at multiple agencies and offices. A Medicaid application is a difficult and cumbersome process with many offices and departments taking part in the decision making process. Most applications take about 45 days to get all the necessary medical and financial verifications provided and verified. The bureaucracy that is our state and federal government was no match for Cathryn's in-depth knowledge and strong advocacy skills. In a day and a half Cathryn had spoken to all the necessary players - at least six different people in three different agencies - and was able to get everyone working together. Within two days of Cathryn stepping in, this patient was funded with Washington Medicaid and able to begin planning to go home with the necessary medications to sustain his life. This was six weeks ago. Just this week this same patient was in Heart Failure Clinic and was tearful as he thanked Cathryn for the help she provided when his need was at its greatest. He is now home with his family and enjoying every moment, with many more to come, thanks to Cathryn Sause.



Award Recipient - April 2009