

Petitioner Requesting Needs Determination

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Statement of Requested Change

Heaven Sent Private Care, LLC is requesting a change in Needs Determination in order to provide deeper, more meaningful care to our clients. By allowing Heaven Sent Private Care to accept Medicare as a source of payment, we will be able to reach out and extend our helping hands towards those whom otherwise may be unable to afford it. As a faith-based organization, it is imperative to us that we offer our services to as many potential clients as we possibly can. Through our research prior to proposing our change, we have come to the conclusion that spirituality and healing often go hand in hand. As the only faith-based Home Health Care organization in our region, we are passionate about our work, and even more passionate about our clients. This is what brings us to our proposal; we seek to reach out to those citizens in need, both medically and spiritually.

Justification for Proposed Change

In 2014, www.pewforum.org conducted a survey giving us a snap shot showing us how religious Americans are. This survey shows us that in the age bracket of 65 years and older, 70% of participants believed in God, and 65% felt that religion was important in their life. Meanwhile, in the age bracket of people aged 18-29 years old, only 40% of participants felt religion was an important part of their life. There is a 25% increase between the age group 18-29 and 65 years and older. Other questions within the survey received similar results, showing a marked increase in the importance of religion as people age. ¹

The people of Randolph County are aging. According to the 2010 US Census, of the 141,752 residents in the county, 14.1%, or 19,987, residents were 65 years or older. In 2015, according to US Census estimates, the population of Randolph County increased to 142,799, or by 0.7%. While this may be a small increase as a whole, the increase of those aged 65 and older jumped to 16.4% of the population, or 23,419. ² While in correlation, this is only a 2.3% increase within the overall population of Randolph County, within the demographic of those aged 65 over older, this

is a 17.2% increase. Going back just a bit farther, according to the 2000 US Census, the population of Randolph County was 130,454 residents, and 12% of those residents, or 15,802 people, were aged 65 and older. ³ From the year 2000 to the current estimate performed in 2015, there was an increase of 48.2% within the demographic of those aged 65 and older. This correlates to an increase of 4.4% within Randolph County. There is no denying the fact that the residents of our beloved county are aging, and they are aging at a rate faster than new births and arrivals to our county.

Research over the years has shown religion and spirituality can have positive and negative effects on health outcomes. At Heaven Sent Private Care, it is our goal to maximize the positive health outcomes religiosity and spirituality can provide, while simultaneously steering clients away from negative religious practices which can hurt their overall health.

In short, it is our belief the Needs Determination for Randolph County should be changed for the following reasons:

- The positive effects of religion and spirituality on mental health in the elderly
- The positive effects of religion and spirituality on physical health in the elderly
- The positive effects of religion and spirituality on social well-being in the elderly
- The positive effects of religion and spirituality on cognitive functions in the elderly

Information Supporting Proposed Adjustment

Being healthy is more than just being free of illness. According to the World Health Organization, health encompasses not only physical well-being, but also mental and social well-being. ⁴ Health is multifaceted and aspects of health are all interrelated in some form or fashion. Spirituality and the proper use of religion can be used to enhance overall well-being, making positive influences in the daily lives of our clients.

- **Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health**

At Heaven Sent Private Care, we want to be the backbone helping to ensure the mental health of our clients. We don't want to focus on just curing and/or soothing the symptoms of mental illness or negative mental processes; it is our goal to go above and beyond the call of duty, utilizing multiple avenues in promoting mental health and well-being. We firmly believe that the utilization of the religion, faith, and spirituality in our clients' daily lives will bring about positive changes overall.

Religion and spirituality can give hope. It can give happiness, optimism, and a greater sense of control. We want to help nurture these feelings, not only through traditional means, but by encouraging the faith and belief our clients have in a power higher than themselves. For example, by helping and encouraging our clients to pray, we can help encourage a sense of control over their lives. By putting their faith into a high power (i.e. God, Jehovah, Allah, etc.), our clients can feel like they are putting problems beyond their means into the Hands of God. By doing this, our clients have faith in the ability of God to help solve the problems and issues in their daily lives.⁶ This faith in God can also help our clients feel hopeful and more optimistic about these very same problems and issues.⁶ The bible offers many uplifting and inspiring scriptures to bring about such feelings. For example:

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

Verses like Isaiah 40:31 tell the believers in Christianity that so long as they place hope in God, he will sustain them. We want our clients to feel like someone has their back, so that they feel optimistic, confident, and hopeful about their lives. We want them to feel that we, along with God, are behind them.

By using religion and spirituality in conjunction with our traditional means of Home Health Care, we can help our clients combat mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. While aging in and of itself may not increase the likelihood of suffering from depression and anxiety, issues from aging might: such as stressful life events (i.e. a death in the family or financial worries) and/or health problems and illnesses.^{7,8} We will take the positive feelings built up through our clients religious and spiritual practices to combat the ill effects of mental illnesses such as these. We will maintain our clients' additional means of emotional outlet (i.e. prayer to a high power), encourage and help our clients to attend religious services (i.e. promoting social interaction, social support), and encourage our clients to follow their religion's tenets and beliefs (i.e. discouraging over drinking, abuse of drugs, unkind acts, encouraging honesty, love, patience, promote altruistic acts, etc.).⁶ It is our goal to use all of these tools to form a relationship built on trust, compassion, and consideration for all aspects in our clients' lives.

- **Religion, Spirituality, and Physical Health**

Not only can religion and spirituality positively influence mental health, it can also have positive effects on physical health too. Many religions encourage healthy living (i.e. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism). It can be a form of worship. For example, the bible encourages followers to eat healthy.

I Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Eating and drinking things that are healthy for you shows God that you care. It also has the added side effects of being good for your body and helping improve health outcomes. According to www.choosemyplate.gov, eating more fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet may reduce the risk of chronic health conditions such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes. It can help lower blood pressure and help reduce the chance of becoming obese. Fruits and vegetables are also a natural source of many vitamins and minerals that help people stay healthy. Protein foods, like meats, poultry, and fish, dairy, like milk, yogurt, and cheese, grains, like rice, oats, and wheat, and oils, like olive, corn, and canola, all have positive health benefits if eaten and used properly.⁹ By encouraging clients to treat their bodies well in the eyes of God, as per the previous example, we are also encouraging them to actively eat healthy, reaping the many benefits that doing so provides. We will also help our clients with appropriate portion control. Research about weight and people who are religious and spiritual have shown that while they may eat healthier, many of these people also eat more of that food, increasing the likelihood of weight based medical illnesses.⁶ At Heaven Sent Private Care, we won't settle for just being a part of that trend. We will encourage our clients to eat the appropriate portion size to maximize the health benefits of the foods our clients eat. Our clients won't be just another number or statistic.

Research shows that stress and mental illnesses that have negative effects on emotions can negatively affect physical health, further showing all aspects of health are interrelated.⁶ This is another area where encouraging the faith our clients have in a higher power shines through. Seeing their body as God's or healthy living as a form of worship, we can encourage the mental and physical behaviors that improve physical health. By promoting these positive health behaviors through religious means, longevity of life can be increased.⁶ Utilizing this aspect of their lives, along with traditional means, we will help our clients live healthier lives for longer. We will help give our clients the opportunity to spend more time with their congregation, family, and friends.

- **Religion, Spirituality, and Social Well-Being**

It can be hard to maintain social relationships as you age. Developing illnesses and/or disabilities make it harder to get out of the house, causing clients to lose access, or making it harder, to reach the social support of their spiritual and religious home. Like mental and physical health, social well-being is an important factor in the overall health of our clients. By helping our clients remain active within their various social spheres (i.e. religious, friends, family), we can help facilitate increased longevity and improved health.¹⁰

At Heaven Sent Private Care, we want our clients to stay active within their religious community. Many of our clients have been active in their church or religious institution for years, and they deserve the chance to maintain their social connections with the friends and members in their congregation. By helping our clients maintain these social connections, we can help them to live longer, promote positive mental and physical health behaviors through social control (how our behaviors are regulated by social structure and norms), and by reducing stress, which, in turn, helps lower things like blood pressure and heart rate and reduces the physical wear and tear on the body.¹⁰ It is our goal, if home bound, to facilitate this social interaction by setting up phone calls and home visits from religious leaders and friends and family from church. We want all our clients to have the opportunity to remain active within this social sphere, if that is their choice.

- **Religion, Spirituality, and Cognitive Function**

Cognitive function is what we use to comprehend the things happening to and around us. The choices we make depend on how we think and how we reason. It involves our memories and perceptions of events. This all falls under cognitive function. Religion and spirituality can encourage positive mental, physical, and social well-being, but the great thing is, by encouraging some of the same habits and ideals that help improve these areas, we can also help improve cognitive function.

As mentioned in a previous example, by helping our clients to eat healthy by building from their desire to worship God, we can also help keep their cognitive functions sharp.¹¹ Eating healthy isn't just good for heart health or weigh control; it helps keep our clients' brains healthier for longer. In the same vein, exercising also benefits cognitive function as well.¹¹ This is why we believe an all-encompassing approach to Home Health Care is important. By utilizing several ideas and concepts at once, we can not only improve physical health, but also improve mental health and cognitive function as well.

For example, prayer to a higher power can help relieve stress. Less stress can mean less depression and anxiety. Less stress means less wear and tear on the body. Exercise helps improve physical health by fighting obesity and improving how well the body functions (i.e. stronger heart muscles). By combining the two ideas into one (prayer and walking), we can help our clients to be less stressed, have more hope, encourage better physical health, and improve cognitive function all in one instance.

Not only can prayer help to relieve mental stress and anguish, it can also encourage mental concentration and be used as a word repeating exercise to help improve cognitive function. It can also help train episodic memory (long-term memories of particular experiences people lived through).⁵ Another activity(ies) that can help improve cognitive function and episodic memory is singing/music listening, activity(ies) that fall right in line with involving religion and spirituality in the health care of our clients.¹² Singing and music are a big part of religious institutions. Hymns and songs are positive and uplifting and are a form of worship and praise to God. Music also engages various parts of the brain.¹² Music is a tool we can easily incorporate into the lives of our clients. At Heaven Sent Private Care, we feel that by bringing religious songs and music into the homes of our clients, especially those who are home bound, that we are bringing positive changes into their lives. By utilizing music, we can help keep our clients cognitive functions sharp, help improve episodic memory, and help to keep our clients happier by helping to relieve anxiety and depression.¹² By using religious songs and music, we add another layer of stress reduction and positive feelings and emotions to help improve mental health, along with cognitive function.

Alternatives to Proposed Change

There are several alternatives to filing this petition.

1. Maintain the status quo
2. Await the next Needs Determination
3. Partner with another Home Health Agency
4. Purchase a Home Health Agency

The status quo and waiting for a change in Needs Determination go hand in hand. People ask us every day about Medicare, and every time we have to give them the same answer. Meanwhile, purchasing an existing Home Health Agency is a costly endeavor in a market that isn't conducive to purchasing. A partnership is theoretically possible, but finding the right fit and successfully meshing two groups together is a difficult task that could potentially harm both companies. Many Home Health Agencies are satisfied with their current set up and may not want

to risk disrupting their work environment. It is with this in mind that Heaven Sent Private Care, LLC has decided to file this petition as our next course of action.

Duplication of Services

It is not the intention of Heaven Sent Private Care, LLC or this proposal to duplicate an existing service within Randolph County, North Carolina. To our knowledge, there are no other Home Health Care providers in our area that provide or aim to provide faith-based care hand in hand with other traditional health care practices. It is our intention give people the option to receive care from a faith-based organization for whatever reason they choose: the desire to work with a faith-based organization, help to further improve not only physical and mental health, but spiritual health as well, or the desire to work with like-minded individuals on a daily or weekly basis.

SMFP Basic Principles

- **Safety and Quality**

Safe and quality health care is important to everyone at Heaven Sent Private Care, LLC. It is important to us to follow all rules and regulations that are in place at local, state, and federal levels to help ensure the safety of our clients. Appropriate training and knowledge is a must. By ensuring our staff is appropriately trained, we will maintain a high level of safety for our clients. With this training and knowledge, we will ensure the high quality of care every client deserves. We believe we can build upon traditional Home Health Care methods by utilizing religion and spirituality to increase to quality of care our clients and potential clients receive. We will never stop striving to improve the quality and safety of the care we provide.

- **Access**

We want to break as many barriers between our clients and access to Home Health Care as possible. A huge barrier for many people is having the monetary access to afford this care. We don't want to have to turn away clients or have clients worry about how they will afford much needed care. By obtaining a Certificate of Need, and eventually becoming a Medicare-certified Home Health Agency, we can help break this financial barrier between us and the people who need our help. It does not and will never matter what age, what race, where you live, or any other reason there could be, we want to give our clients access to the best quality Home Health Care.

- **Value**

By helping our clients live healthier lives via traditional and religious means, we can help to reduce the burden of health care expenses for both our clients and the state. We will use religion and spirituality to amplify our traditional Home Health Care techniques, resulting in even better health outcomes than before. While there may be an upfront cost to our clients, and potentially the state, we believe offering preventive care and maintenance to our clients to be the most beneficial route in the long run. There is more value in preventing illnesses than there is in treating them after they have appeared. We believe the value of our care isn't just in how cost effective it is, but also in the quality of life our clients have for years to come. Our clients will benefit from improved health while living in the environment they are most comfortable and familiar with.

Conclusion

Heaven Sent Private Care, LLC believes the use of religion and spirituality in the lives of our clients have noticeable health benefits and strove to prove so within this petition. We recognize that not all clients we encounter will wish to have a faith-based care plan; however, we believe utilizing the knowledge we possess concerning this area can be used improve the care and quality of life in all of our clients. Knowledge is power, and by knowing the benefits that religion and spirituality offer, we can craft specialized care plans to meet the needs of all our clients, whether they are religious/spiritual or not. We want offer an all-encompassing care plan that focuses not only physical, but mental, social, and spiritual needs, too. By focusing on the whole picture and not just the parts, we can help to improve the health and longevity of our clients. Our clients are our life, and we want to see everyone happy and healthy.

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