



*When You Need Assistance With Healthcare*

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**Healthcare Liaison Launches Nation's First Accreditation Program  
For Private Healthcare Advocates — October 27-28**

Program Addresses Need To Set Standards For Rapidly Growing Profession; Protect Consumers

**Berkeley, CA, October 15, 2007** — Healthcare Liaison has launched the nation's first accreditation program for private healthcare advocates. The announcement was made today by Healthcare Liaison principal Joanna Smith, LCSW, MPH.

"As healthcare systems in the US become more complex and access to appropriate healthcare continues to be more problematic, a new private healthcare advocate profession is emerging," says Smith. "Consumers need a reliable way to assess the expertise, ethics and business practices of an individual practitioner. By standardizing requirements and accrediting practitioners, consumers can have greater confidence in the level of professionalism they receive from a private healthcare advocate."

According to Smith, private healthcare advocates assist clients of all ages in dealing with a number of healthcare related issues, including assessing treatment options; identifying and arranging appropriate resources; and intervening with insurers to help resolve payment or coverage issues. "Private healthcare advocates are not employed by a hospital, medical group or insurance company," says Smith. "They work directly for their clients and do not receive reimbursement for any other source. They may utilize a face-to-face model or a telephonic/computer based system, but the goal is the same: to assist the consumer through complexities of the healthcare system."

The first accreditation seminar takes place October 27-28 at the Health Education Center, Samuel Merritt College, Oakland, CA. For information or to register, call 510-704-8476; or email: Joanna@healthcareliaison.com.

About Healthcare Liaison. Established in 2005, Healthcare Liaison is the first private healthcare advocacy practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. Founder and principal Joanna Smith, LCSW, MPH has 25 years experience in the fields of health, public health and mental health, working as a medical social worker and hospital discharge planner in healthcare systems. For more information visit: [www.healthcareliaison.com](http://www.healthcareliaison.com)