

## Get More Referrals With Newspaper Columns!

*by Adam D. Bishop, MBA*

Another successful strategy for becoming an information source for your community is to have a newspaper column of your own. You've seen columns written by doctors, chefs and gardeners—why not home care professionals?

This day and age, with an ever increasing number of seniors and families facing the challenge of caring for their parents at home, the opportunity and need exists for your agency to have a column in the newspaper. Your column could provide informative advice, and serve as a great tool to build up community rapport and referrals. In your column your agency would answer questions sent in by interested readers. Being able to supply written responses, through your column, provides ample time to research and address these questions and concerns.

### **How does your agency benefit from having a column?**

First of all, when you have your own column you are considered to be the “expert” in your area. Whenever someone in your community faces the challenge of caring for someone at home or knows someone with this challenge, they will immediately think of your agency. This is a great way to dramatically increase your business. In addition, your agency can use excerpts from your columns in all your marketing materials, new client kits, brochures, etc. Do you think this would help your agency establish credibility? Absolutely.

### **How do you get a Newspaper Column?**

It may take some time and persistence with the editor of the newspaper. But if you provide him/her with a letter explaining the benefits that your column could provide his/her newspaper and its readers, you will have a very good chance at running a column. Prepare a list of column topics and actually write out a few. Determine a column word count and stay within in. The editor will not be interested in having to take time to edit your column every week! Show the editor that you are prepared to meet weekly deadlines. Be prepared and be persistent!

### **Column Topics**

- ▶▶ What do you look for when selecting an agency?
- ▶▶ Benefits of home care services
- ▶▶ Who can qualify for home care services?
- ▶▶ Types of home care services available
- ▶▶ Respite Care/Private Duty Care
- ▶▶ Employment opportunities in home care
- ▶▶ Advice for family caregivers
- ▶▶ Pediatric care
- ▶▶ Preparing for the aging of our parents
- ▶▶ Alternate living choices
- ▶▶ Maintaining health and wellness through the aging process