



WE LOVE WHAT WE DO

# CARE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION FOR CLIENTS OF BAYADA AND FAMILY MEMBERS

BAYADA Clinical Manager Pam Compagnola, RN

## Help Celebrate Clinicians Who Make our Mission Possible



BAYADA's Heroes on the Home Front have been doing something incredible that has never been done before: making our critical **Mission Possible** amid a global pandemic. With *compassion, excellence, and reliability*, our nurses, aides, therapists, habilitation technicians, behavioral health professionals, and every clinician on the front lines continue to deliver the highest-quality care. **We are proud beyond words to recognize and celebrate these heroic clinicians** for carrying out our mission and making such an important difference in the lives of the individuals and communities we serve.



When our 10-week contest starts on September 20, all BAYADA field employees will be eligible to win thousands of dollars in cash during our weekly, runner-up, and grand-prize drawings. Office staff, fellow clinicians, and community partners will be taking part, and we encourage you to do the same. If you know any BAYADA clinicians who help make our Mission Possible by providing care with *compassion, excellence, and reliability*, please consider recognizing them with a contest entry.

Simply visit [bayada.com/contest](https://bayada.com/contest) beginning September 20 to submit contest entries. While each submission gives a clinician the chance to win a prize, your kind words of appreciation alone will make them feel like a winner! If you do not have access to the internet, please call your BAYADA service office to share how your clinicians have made our Mission Possible in the work that they do, and we'll be happy to submit entries on your behalf.

**The contest ends November 28—thank you in advance for your participation!**

## Senior Nutrition: **Why Our Diets Should Change as We Age**

It's common for eating habits to vary as we get older. Lifestyle changes may mean that we prepare fewer of our own meals, while health conditions or medications can reduce our appetites or impair our ability to taste or smell food. For all these reasons and others, seniors may have to adapt their eating habits to ensure they are getting adequate nutrition to meet their evolving needs as they age.

### General nutrition guidelines for older adults

**1.** Choose fiber-rich foods (great choices are dark-green vegetables, beans, and lentils). This will help you stay regular, control your weight, and prevent disease.

- 2.** Drink water (at least 8 glasses of 8 ounces each, every day) to stay hydrated.
- 3.** Choose foods rich in important vitamins and minerals to protect your brain, bone, and heart health. B-complex vitamins (B12, B6, and folate/folic acid), calcium, and vitamin D are at the top of the list.



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# Champions Among Us: Client Advocate Fights to Increase Nursing Wages



BAYADA client **Ari A.**, 39, has defied the odds. Born with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) type 1 in 1982, he could have been part of the 90 percent of people at the time who died from the disease before the age of two. But not only has he survived—he has thrived.



BAYADA client Ari A. in Washington, DC

SMA is a group of hereditary diseases that progressively destroys nerve cells in the brain stem and spinal cord that control essential skeleton muscle activities such as speaking, walking, breathing, and swallowing, leading to muscle weakness and atrophy.

Thanks to life-saving home care through the North Carolina state-funded

private duty nursing program (PDN), Ari has been able to remain safe at home and out of more costly care settings such as hospitals and nursing homes. In fact, Ari, who relies on a tracheostomy and ventilator to breathe, has only been hospitalized twice in 35 years.

He also credits his nurses for enabling him to graduate high school, earn a bachelor's degree, and go on to earn a master's certificate in technical writing. He currently authors a column for SMA News Today and dedicates much of his time to advocating on behalf of the many who also depend on home care nursing. Like others, Ari is worried about losing consistency of care, primarily due to the low wages in home care as compared to those offered to nurses in other settings.

## PDN is at a crucial crossroads

The PDN program continues to be plagued by workforce challenges as nurses are attracted to jobs in hospitals and other facilities where they can earn up to \$15 more per hour.

"Nurses are understandably going to work elsewhere," said Ari, who has lost five out of eight of his nurses in the past three years. "I have been unable to replace most of the nurses I've lost. What's worse is I'm about to lose a sixth nurse who has been working four to six nights a week. When she leaves, I don't know where my care will come from. My mom can't work 12 hours during the day, and then stay up all night to safely meet my needs."

Recently, the NC legislature increased funding to every state-based home care program by 15 percent but only increased PDN funding by 5 percent. Ari and other home care advocates who are struggling to access the nursing care they need are urging lawmakers to authorize a permanent 15 percent increase to the PDN program. This will help home care agencies offer competitive wages, giving those with medically complex needs access to the home nursing care they deserve.

"My nurses have provided me with life-sustaining care," said Ari. "I hope the state can help them earn a life-sustaining wage and recognize that home care is the future."

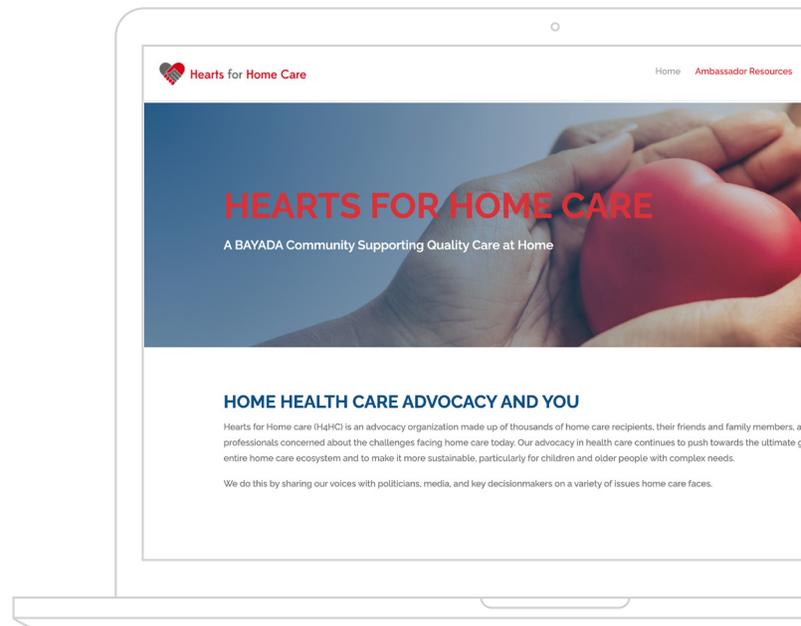
As part of his advocacy, Ari produced a video to educate NC legislators about the impact of home care nursing.

View Ari's video at [bit.ly/Ari-Video](https://bit.ly/Ari-Video).

Read the SMA News Today column at [bit.ly/SMA-Column](https://bit.ly/SMA-Column).

## You can make a difference

From attending in-person or virtual meetings with a legislator and sending emails, to participating in events and sharing your story in the media, there are many ways to get involved in home care advocacy. For more information, visit [heartsforhomecare.com](https://heartsforhomecare.com).



## It's a Win-Win for This Client and Caregiver Team



When your job is to *help people have a safe home life with comfort, independence, and dignity*, every day brings some kind of joy, some kind of victory. It is a labor of love that reaps as many rewards for our staff as it does for our clients and their families. Two people who perfectly illustrate that “when we help others, we help ourselves” are BAYADA client **Jeanette D.** and BAYADA Home Health Aide (HHA) **Maridelsis “Mari” Polo-Avila** from our Winter Park, Florida assistive care office.

### Jeanette

Jeanette is 97 years young and still living independently in her home of 40 years. Only in her nineties has she needed some professional support, but she still enjoys playing Cribbage, walking, feeding wildlife, and even swimming in her spring-fed pond. Jeanette’s daughter, **Linda**, visits often and keeps a close watch from 3,000 miles away at her home in California. So they rely on their local BAYADA care team to provide household and dietary support, medication reminders, and help with daily living about 72 hours per week.

“BAYADA has been providing reliable, loving care for my mother for three years,” Linda shared. “I feel very blessed, because I’m confident in their excellent communication and I trust that they are going to be there for my mom. They have exceeded our expectations time and time again, and my mother’s thriving as a result.” Their wonderful care team includes HHAs **Rosana Antoine-Laquerre**, originally from Haiti, **Mila Sikorski** from Lithuania, and **Mari** from Cuba.

### Mari

Mari moved to the US eight years ago and has been a BAYADA HHA for more than four years. “I wanted to be a BAYADA HHA because I love to help others, and it has been an incredible experience. I enjoy what I do, and I am so grateful to the people who support me in fulfilling my dreams.”

One of Mari’s dreams was to become a US citizen. “I wanted to become a US citizen because I love this country and the opportunities it has provided me,” she explained. “It is my way to thank this country for allowing my family and me to live in freedom with dignity.”

### Helping Mari become a US citizen

While Mari wasn’t proficient in English, Linda jumped at the chance to bring her on board when the opportunity came to invite Mari onto Jeanette’s home care team. “We said,

absolutely,” Linda recalled. “My mother can keep her mind active by teaching Mari English. Maybe Mari can teach my mother Spanish, and we’ll see how this goes.” They hit it off, and soon they decided that they would study together for the United States citizenship test.

From then on, when they were not busy doing other things, Jeanette would quiz Mari on the practice tests.

### Mission accomplished

Mari passed her test with flying colors, and when she officially became a US citizen, Jeanette and Linda threw her a surprise party attended by their BAYADA team. “Mari was incredibly moved, and my mother was just overjoyed,” Linda remembered with emotion. “It was one of those above and beyond BAYADA moments, for sure.”

### United toward a goal, we all win.

Linda sees their relationships as a win-win, all around. “What a great team we have. All three of my mother’s caregivers, they leave notes, they text each other. We have a shopping system where they help make a list of what’s needed, and I order and have it delivered. Mom feels cared for and loved, and everybody feels like they’re part of an absolutely important, functioning team.”

They are a team united for Jeanette’s best quality of life, fulfilled by their common goals. “This has been the best,” Linda shared, “because Mom feels like she has a sense of purpose: she helps Mari with English, Rosana with laundry and cooking, and Mila with gardening and organizing. It gives me such peace of mind to know they keep her active—mentally, spiritually, and physically—every day, no matter what. We feel like we’re all in this together. They are part of my family.”



Photo taken prior to COVID-19. Pictured with Jeanette are her home health aides (from l to r) Mari, Mila, and Rosana.

How well do you think you could answer the 100 civics questions to become a US citizen? Quiz yourself [bit.ly/Citizen-Test](https://bit.ly/Citizen-Test).



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Content in this newsletter is provided as general summary information for our clients and is not intended to take the place of personalized medical guidance. We encourage you to seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care professional if you have specific questions about your care. BAYADA specialty practices include Home Health Care, Pediatrics, Hospice, Behavioral Health, and Habilitation. Services may vary by location.

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## Senior Nutrition: **Why Our Diets Should Change as We Age**

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### **Keep your brain healthy, too**

Although age is the number one risk factor for dementia, nutrition is a key factor. The right dietary choices can support brain function and help keep you mentally sharp.

#### **They include:**

- **Fruits and vegetables:** Avocados, cherries, and berries (especially dark ones like black cherries, blackberries, and blueberries), and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and dark leafy greens are wonderful sources of nutrition to protect brain function and memory. Beans also are a good source of iron, which benefits learning, memory, and attention.
- **Seafood, algae, and fatty fish:** Omega-3 fatty acids, especially docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), are essential for brain health. They can be found in fatty fish like salmon, tuna, sardines, and herring, or in supplements made from fish oil, seaweed, or microalgae.

- **Nuts:** Nuts like walnuts contain healthy fats and vitamin E that can help slow cognitive decline as you age. Opt for an ounce per day to reap the benefits without consuming too many calories.

### **Make it interesting and appetizing**

If you find you don't enjoy the smell or taste of food as much as you used to, try enhancing its flavor with herbs and spices. Many dried varieties are available in table-top shakers that should replace your salt shaker. When choosing flavor enhancers, read the ingredient label and avoid those containing salt, sodium, or monosodium glutamate (MSG).

Meals are more enjoyable when shared with others. Try to make an effort to take meals in a social environment at least a couple of times every week. Sit with others in your residential dining room, senior center, or place of worship. Or invite your friend to join you at your home, a potluck, or a restaurant.

To learn more, visit [bit.ly/bayada-nutrition](http://bit.ly/bayada-nutrition).

