



## NATIONAL GUARDIANSHIP ASSOCIATION

### **POSITION STATEMENT ON GUARDIANSHIP CERTIFICATION**

#### OUR POSITION:

Guardianship certification promotes ethical guardianship practices and insures availability of qualified guardians who understand and have embraced the best guardianship practices.

#### THE CALL TO ACTION

- A non-family guardian who is providing services to two or more wards should obtain and maintain guardian certification.
- Such certification should come from a national certifying body such as the Center for Guardianship Certification (CGC).
- All states should require certification by CGC of guardians appointed in their states.
- Guardians should also obtain any state-specific certification available.
- Judges and court officials should seek out guardians who are certified, especially when assigning a "stranger" guardian to an individual with diminished capacity.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE ISSUE:

Guardianship for an adult is a serious legal relationship in which an individual's rights are transferred to a third party through a court process. The court finds that the individual lacks the capacity to make decisions and the individual is in effect returned to the legal status of a child. Thus, the guardian has the responsibility to act in the person's best interest and to protect and advocate for the person. The guardian must understand the ethical issues related to making decisions for that individual, and know what constitutes best practice.

#### RATIONALE:

- Certification is an important component of the effort to raise the standard of excellence in guardianship nationally.
- A guardian's professional reputation must be above reproach. The certification process assists in publicly confirming that by requiring the guardian to reveal any concerns in the application and screening process.
- Further, certification requires the certified guardian to adhere to certain rules of practice and conduct, and allows the certifying body to publicly remove that certification through due process deliberations if proof of infractions is revealed.

- The effort to obtain certification requires the guardian to complete an application, undergo training and testing and pay a fee, thus demonstrating more than a casual commitment to the field.
- Certification rules require that the guardian participate in continuing education each year, thus helping the guardian to remain current on issues related to that practice.

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT

Based on the above, we support guardianship certification as a way to facilitate ethical guardianship practices and insure availability of qualified guardians who understand and have embraced the best guardianship practices.

*3-18-11, 4-14-11 JRN, peh*