Boston Senior Home Care is proud to introduce Emily Judd as the new Director of BEI. Emily comes to us from HouseWorks, where she served as Director of Community Relations. In that role, she led the effort to communicate HouseWorks’ recognized best practices and its innovative, flexible, and caring approach. Before working with HouseWorks, Emily was the Director of Marketing at Goddard House Assisted Living in Brookline, and the admissions and marketing director at Commonwealth Communities headquartered in Stoughton.

In addition to her tremendous work experience, Emily also has significant educational achievements that underscore her commitment to helping underserved populations. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Administration from the University of North Florida, a Master of Science degree in Gerontology from the University of Massachusetts Boston, and a certificate in elder meditation.

She maintains this commitment in her personal life as well. Emily was a member of the Massachusetts Assisted Living Facilities Association Quality Committee, is a member of the Massachusetts Alzheimer’s Association, and is on the board of the Massachusetts Gerontology Association. She also volunteers at the Esther B. Sanger Center in Quincy, helping to distribute groceries to low-income Quincy residents.

We asked Emily some questions about why she came to BSHC and what she plans to achieve in her new role. This is what she said:

**Why did you make the switch from HouseWorks to Boston ElderINFO?**

I’m an enthusiastic collaborator. Over the years, I have learned how to counsel families in locating the right care for their aging relatives. I have positively and effectively marketed assisted living, dementia care, home care, and skilled nursing facility care. And up until recently, I have witnessed a lack of communication between various health care sectors. Our siloed system can be connected through Boston ElderINFO because we have the most accurate information for consumers of all incomes, not just low income. BEI utilizes a significant approach at avoiding the general (and all too common) term “crisis management.” I wanted to lead that charge.
What do you hope to accomplish as the new director?
Oh gosh, I have so many goals for the team! Here are a few: encourage an ongoing exchange of information and dialogue between the consumer and elder care professionals; increase outreach and education to the elderly and disabled communities at large; follow a “one-stop-shop” approach (no wrong door policy) for information and referrals, not just for the aging populations, but the disabled populations as well; promote out-of-the-box thinking and creativity with my staff. It’s OK to be a little crazy sometimes and learn something new.

What would you tell people who are on the fence about needing advice, but are hesitant to call or contact BEI?
Good question! When consumers and their families learn that there are opportunities and choices in planning for their future, or want to proactively manage their health, there are no qualms. They call! A lack of information is what holds folks back. If they’ve never heard of BEI or stereotype us as a service that costs money like a geriatric care manager or Village membership, or is only for poor Bostonians, then they miss out.

What is your most common type of referral/typical caller?
Our call center is busy! We average 600 calls/month. The breakdown is something like: 28% are consumers, 21% are caregivers, and 51% are eldercare professionals.

The best part of our program is that every day brings a new challenge. At our weekly team meetings, I ask my staff about both successful and not-so-successful stories they experience. This helps encourage other team members to learn how to not only empower the caller, but also to ensure that we are making every effort possible to solve the problem. It can be extremely gratifying.

When consumers call, they typically look for homemaker services, but when the talented Geriatric Information Specialist further investigates the caller’s needs, the senior realizes they qualify for so much more.

What is the most unusual request BEI has ever received?
Addison, one of my team members, took a call a few months back from an elderly gentleman looking for spots to meet elderly women. I guess he was lonely! A few years ago, Maria, another specialist, took a call from an elderly woman who had a tall tree that allowed squirrels to jump onto her roof and run around. I guess they were pretty loud because she called BEI looking for someone to chop the thing down! Lisa, another team member, had a Russian woman call to get her 5 year old daughter’s birth certificate changed to English. We hear all kinds of stories!