



Reaching Out to New Members

“How are you feeling?” is not a casual question for Robert Qualls and Shirley Boothe. On any day, the answer can involve a dizzying array of medical, emotional and logistical issues that, for Robert, literally are a matter of life and death.

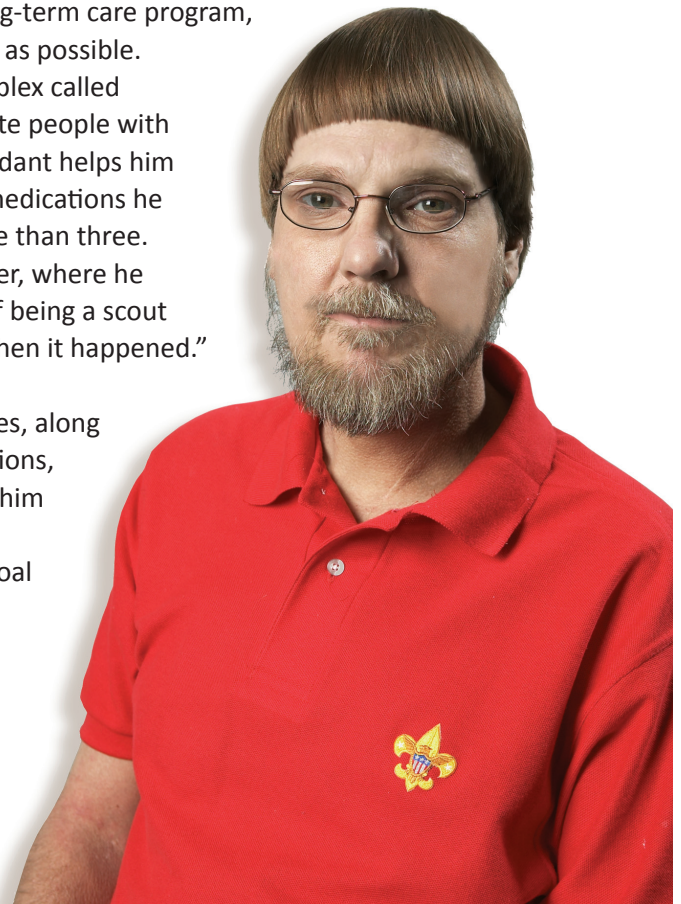
Robert, 44, of Houston, is an Amerigroup member who participates in an innovative program that the state of Texas offers people who are enrolled in Medicaid and have long-term physical or psychological disabilities. Shirley is Robert’s Amerigroup care manager, the one person he can turn to for help in addressing virtually all his health needs. And as Robert observed, “I deal with a very full plate of physical and emotional issues.”

Robert was born with hydrocephalus, a buildup of fluid in the brain that he estimates has required “somewhere between 20 and 30 brain surgeries” to date. Complications from the condition have left him with cerebral palsy. He is legally blind, he walks with a cane for balance, and he struggles with chronic pain, anxiety and depression. At any one time, he said, he is being treated with about 10 to 12 different medications.

“Robert has his good days and his bad days,” said Shirley, who helps him work through both. Shirley and Amerigroup’s long-term care program, Ameriplus, see that there are as many good days as possible. Robert lives independently in an apartment complex called Independence Hall, which is built to accommodate people with physical disabilities. A part-time home care attendant helps him keep his place in order. He has access to all the medications he needs; previous programs limited him to no more than three. He spends his good days at an adult activity center, where he participates in a scouting program. “I dreamed of being a scout when I was a boy,” he said. “I was 40 years old when it happened.”

The Ameriplus program coordinates these services, along with Robert’s numerous physicians and prescriptions, with Shirley serving as the central link. She visits him periodically, keeps abreast of his medical records and is never more than a phone call away. “My goal is to offer Robert encouragement and keep him participating in his activities,” Shirley said.

Said Robert, “Shirley, God bless her; she does great.”



Robert Qualls, Amerigroup member

Amerigroup is one of the few companies that has developed and deployed a comprehensive long-term care program like Ameriplus. Robert and Shirley know that long-term care is literally a never-ending challenge; the right help and support for urgent individual needs can never come soon enough. But for Shirley, the task is more than worthwhile. “It’s a hard thing to do,” she said. “It can be frustrating. But if you do it well, it’s very rewarding. When you have someone look you in the eye and say, ‘You’re an angel sent from heaven,’ well, you’d have to be tougher than an old boot not to feel that.”

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she does great.”**

Robert Qualls
Amerigroup member,
on his case manager, Shirley Boothe