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SERVICE ACCESS AND AUTHORIZATION

When funding is appropriated for a new Children's Choice Waiver opportunity or an existing opportunity is vacated, the next individual on the Developmental Disabilities Request for Services Registry (DDRFSR) will receive a written notice indicating that a waiver opportunity is available. That individual will be evaluated for a possible Children's Choice Waiver opportunity assignment.

The applicant will receive a waiver offer packet that includes a Support Coordination Agency Freedom of Choice form. The support coordinator is a resource to assist individuals in the coordination of needed supports and services. The applicant must complete and return the packet to be linked to a support coordination agency.

Once linked, the support coordinator will assist the applicant in gathering the documents which may be needed for both the financial eligibility and medical certification process for level of care determination. The support coordinator informs the individual of the freedom of choice of enrolled waiver providers, the availability of services as well as the assistance provided through the support coordination service.

Once it has been determined that the applicant meets the level of care requirements for the program, a second home visit is made to finalize the Plan of Care (POC). The following must be addressed in the POC:

- The applicant's assessed needs,
- The types and number of services (including waiver and all other services) necessary to maintain the applicant safely in the community,
- The individual cost of each service (including waiver and all other services), and
- The average cost of services per day covered by the POC.

Provider Selection

The support coordinator must present the recipient with a list of providers who are enrolled in Medicaid to provide those services that have been identified on the POC. The support coordinator will have the recipient or responsible representative complete the provider Freedom of Choice (FOC) form initially and annually thereafter for each identified waiver service.

The support coordinator is responsible for:

- Notifying the provider that the recipient has selected their agency to provide the

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necessary service,

- Requesting the provider sign and return the
 - Provider Agreement form,
 - Emergency plan, and
 - Individualized staffing back-up plan.
- Forwarding the POC packet to the local Human Services Authority or District, hereafter referred to as the local governing entity (LGE), for review and approval.

NOTE: The authorization to provide service is contingent upon approval by the LGE.

Prior Authorization

Prior authorization (PA) is the process to approve specific services prior to service delivery and reimbursement for an enrolled Medicaid recipient by an enrolled Medicaid provider. The purpose of PA is to validate the service that is requested is medically necessary and meets criteria for reimbursement. PA does not guarantee payment for the service as payment is contingent upon passing all the edits contained within the claims payment process, the recipient's continued Medicaid eligibility, the provider's continued Medicaid eligibility, and the ongoing medical necessity for the service.

PA is performed by the Medicaid data contractor and is specific to a recipient, provider, service code, established quantity of units, and for specific dates of service. Prior authorizations are issued in quarterly intervals directly to the provider, with the last quarterly authorization ending on the POC end date.

PA revolves around the POC document and any subsequent revision, which means that only the service codes and units specified in the approved POC will be considered for prior authorization. Services provided without prior authorization are not eligible for reimbursement.

The service provider is responsible for the following activities:

- Checking prior authorizations to ensure all prior authorizations for services match the approved services in the recipient's POC. Any mistakes must be immediately corrected to match the approved services in the POC.
- Verifying the direct service worker's timesheet is completed correctly and services were delivered according to the recipient's approved POC before billing for the service.

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- Verifying that services were documented as evidenced by timesheets and progress notes and are within the approved service limits as identified in the recipient's POC.
- Completing data entry into the direct service provider data system called Louisiana Services Tracking (LAST).
- Inputting the correct date(s) of service, authorization numbers, provider number, and recipient number in the billing system.
- Billing only for the services that were approved in the recipient's POC and delivered to the recipient.
- Reconciling all remittance advices issued by the DHH fiscal intermediary with each payment.
- Checking billing records to ensure the appropriate payment was received. (**NOTE:** Service providers have one-year timely filing billing requirement under Medicaid regulations.)

In the event that reimbursement is received without a PA, the amount paid is subject to recoupment.

NOTE: Authorization for services will not be issued retroactively unless a person leaving a facility/institution is involved with special circumstances.

Post Authorization

To receive post authorization, a service provider must enter the required information into the billing system maintained by the Medicaid data contractor. The Medicaid data contractor checks the information entered into the billing system by the service provider against the prior authorized unit(s) of service. Once post authorization is granted, the service provider may bill the DHH fiscal intermediary for the appropriate unit(s) of service.

Providers must use the correct PA number when filing claims for services rendered. Claims with the incorrect PA number will be denied.

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Changing Direct Service Providers

Recipients/families may change direct service providers once every twelve months. All requests for changes in services and/or service hours must be made by the recipient/family.

Direct service providers may be changed for good cause at any time as approved by the LGE.

Good cause is defined as:

- A recipient/family moving to another region in the state where the current direct service provider does not or cannot provide services,
- The recipient/family and the direct service provider have unresolved difficulties and mutually agree to a transfer,
- The recipient's health, safety or welfare have been compromised, or
- The direct service provider has not rendered services in a manner satisfactory to the recipient/family.

The recipients/families must contact their support coordinator to change direct service providers. The support coordinator will assist in facilitating a team meeting involving the current direct service provider(s) if agreed to by the recipient/family. This meeting will address the reason for wanting to terminate services with the current service provider(s). Whenever possible, the current service provider will have the opportunity to submit a corrective action plan with specific time lines, not to exceed 30 days to attempt to meet the needs of the recipient.

If the recipient/family refuses a team meeting, the support coordinator and the LGE determines that a meeting is not possible or appropriate, or the corrective action plan and timelines are not met, the support coordinator will:

- Provide the recipient/family with the current Freedom of Choice (FOC) list of service providers in his/her region,
- Assist the recipient/family in completing the FOC and release of information form,
- Ensure the current provider is notified immediately upon knowledge of the request and prior to the transfer,
- Obtain the case record from the releasing provider which must include:

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- Progress notes from the last six months, or if the recipient has received services from the provider for less than six months, all progress notes from date of admission,
- Written documentation of services provided, including monthly and quarterly progress summaries,
- Current POC,
- Records tracking recipient's progress towards POC goals and objectives,
- Behavior management plans, current and past if applicable,
- Documentation of the amount of authorized services remaining in the POC, including applicable time sheets, and
- Documentation of exit interview.

The support coordinator will forward copies of the following to the new service provider:

- Most current POC,
- Current assessments on which POC is based,
- Number of services used in the calendar year,
- Records from the previous service provider, and
- All other waiver documents necessary for the new service provider to begin providing supports and services.

NOTE: Transfers must be made at least seven days prior to the end of the service authorization quarter. The start date should be effective the first day of the new quarter in order to coordinate services and billing. The LGE may waive this requirement in writing due to good cause, at which time the start date will be the first day of the first full calendar month.

The new service provider must bear the cost of copying, which cannot exceed the community's competitive copying rate.

Prior Authorization for New Service Providers

The support coordinator will complete the POC revision from with the start date for the new provider and the end date for the transferring provider and submit the revision request to the LGE for approval. Upon approval, a new PA number will be issued to the new provider with the effective starting date. The transferring agency's PA number will expire on the date immediately preceding the PA date for the new provider.

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Neither the LGE nor its agent will backdate the new PA period to the first day of the first full calendar month in which the FOC and transfer of records are completed. If the new provider receives the records and admits a recipient in the middle of a month, the new provider cannot bill for services until the first day of the next month. New providers who provide services prior to the begin date of the new PA period will not be reimbursed.

Exceptions to the existing service provider end date and the new service provider begin date may be approved by the LGE when the reason for the change is due to good cause.

Changing Support Coordination Agencies

A recipient may change support coordination agencies after a 12-month period or at any time for good cause if the new agency has not met their maximum number of recipients. Thereafter, a recipient may request a change in support coordination agencies every 12 months. Good cause is defined as:

- A recipient/family moving to another region in the state,
- The recipient/family and the support coordination agency have unresolved difficulties and mutually agree to a transfer,
- The recipient's health, safety or welfare have been compromised, or
- The support coordination agency has not rendered services in a manner satisfactory to the recipient/family.

Participating support coordination agencies should refer to Section 14.11 – Support Coordination which provides a detailed description of their roles and responsibilities.

Changes in Authorized Services

Any change or revision to the POC must be prior approved by the LGE. Requests for changes to the POC must be made by the recipient/family to the support coordinator. Changes will not be made solely on the request of the service provider.

The recipient/family may not authorize services or authorize direct service workers to work hours or services not included in the approved POC.