

Dear Home Care Participant and Caregiver,

The Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) helps coordinate and monitor in-home shift nursing services for our participants in the Home Care Program. We do this work on behalf of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS).

We have strengthened this support to help ensure DSCC is addressing all areas to help support in-home nursing services.

The O.B. versus Eagleson Consent Decree requires HFS to take certain steps to improve families' ability to receive in-home shift nursing at the approved level. (You may learn more about the consent decree at <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/info/legal/Pages/OBConsentDecree.aspx>.)

In response to this consent decree, DSCC created a Staffing Support Team. The team includes a Staffing Support Specialist. This position reviews DSCC's care coordination efforts related to nurse staffing and recommends solutions to staffing issues to the care coordination team. DSCC staff also regularly collect information on the status of in-home nursing staffing for all Home Care participants.

Below are more details for how the processes work to help our families.

### **Staffing Support Team**

The DSCC Staffing Support Team consists of the Staffing Support Specialist, the participant's Care Coordinator and Regional Manager, and DSCC's leadership team.

### **Staffing Support Specialist**

The DSCC Staffing Support Specialist oversees care coordination efforts and ensures our staff has tried and documented all strategies to resolve nurse staffing concerns. The Staffing Support Specialist works together with the care coordination team to problem solve and find solutions to help participants receive the necessary home nursing support.

We understand that nursing is a challenge across the state. This challenge remains as time goes on and the nursing shortage continues to grow. We at DSCC want to do all that we can to help improve nurse staffing for Home Care participants. The Staffing Support Specialist works with the care coordination team to brainstorm all options.

Examples of these efforts include:

- Ensure that all nursing agencies that serve the county are actively recruiting.
- Confirm that the care coordination team is following up with recruiting agencies on a regular basis.
- Look into options of area agencies expanding their service area to other counties.
- Address the option of dual agency care.
- Explore the option of Certified Nurses' Aide (CNA) support, if applicable.
- Ensure that school nursing has been addressed and work with the Care Coordinator to determine if the school should recruit a nurse for school hours.
- Ensure recruiting agencies are aware of private insurance benefits, if applicable.
- Ensure the family is aware of all other state waiver programs that may benefit their family.

The Staffing Support Specialist does not recruit for nursing agencies or directly resolve barriers preventing nursing in the home. Nursing agencies operate as their own business and are the employer of the nurses.

### **Staffing Support Criteria**

Once a Care Coordinator has tried to help a family obtain nursing and challenges remain, he or she will reach out to the Staffing Support Specialist. A Staffing Support request must meet certain criteria before the Staffing Support Specialist gets involved. These criteria include:

- The participant is institutionalized and cannot go home due to a lack of nursing.
- The participant is a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) youth in care at risk of losing foster placement.
- A parent is at risk of losing employment.
- Health or safety concerns exist.
- Parent requests review of staffing based on concerns that the care coordination team is not adequately addressing staffing

To request staffing support based on concerns that the care coordination team is not adequately addressing staffing, the parent/guardian should reach out to their child's DSCC Care Coordinator and request the involvement of the Staffing Support Specialist.

The Staffing Support Team will submit difficult situations to DSCC leadership and HFS as necessary for more strategies or suggestions. HFS will get involved if all Staffing Support criteria are met and the lack of nursing continues despite all efforts.

## **Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting**

Per the consent decree, HFS must track, monitor and report on all participant requests referred to the Staffing Support Team. This report will include a description of barriers and challenges as well as results achieved.

HFS will also collect information about the status of in-home nursing staffing for all participants enrolled in the Home Care Program. This information includes:

- The allocated number of in-home nursing hours
- The number of in-home nursing hours provided per week
- The assigned nursing agency
- Reasons for any shortfall in hours provided
- Steps to obtain in-home nursing

## **Impact on Your Family**

Your Care Coordinator will ask you about your nurse staffing every month. Please answer questions related to staffing to the best of your ability. It will not only help you identify barriers and fixes but will help HFS look at nursing issues on a statewide level. This process will help identify problems and resolutions for all Home Care participants.

Again, we understand that finding nurses has been an ongoing challenge. We want to do all that we can to help. We are open to your suggestions on more improvements that can be made.

You may call 1-800-322-3722 to contact your Care Coordinator or your local DSCC regional office with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas F. Jerkovitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Thomas F. Jerkovitz  
Executive Director  
Division of Specialized Care for Children