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## **Division of Specialized Care for Children**

### **PROVIDER NOTICE**

Date: Feb. 2, 2026

Dear Nursing Agencies,

Thank you for your continued service to those enrolled in the Home Care Program. We are sending this notice to announce the release of the new Home Care Program Nursing Agency Guidebook.

#### **Guidebook Background and Purpose**

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) Home Care Program supports families in caring for technology-dependent individuals who require intensive skilled nursing care to live in a home and community setting. As the operating agency for the Home Care Program, the Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) provides quality assurance and monitoring to ensure that participants receive quality care from approved nursing agencies.

Nursing agencies play a crucial role in providing high-quality care to Home Care Program participants. DSCC recognizes that program requirements change regularly, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 public health emergency Period. This Guidebook consolidates this knowledge for greater transparency, supporting quality services.

#### **Access, Content, and Organization**

The Guidebook provides a comprehensive overview of DSCC's roles and responsibilities as the operating agency as well as the roles and responsibilities of its approved nursing agencies, including service requirements and claims submission and reimbursement guidelines. It also includes dedicated appendices for quality and claims resources.

The Guidebook is available on the DSCC website at <https://dscc.uic.edu/providers/provider-forms/>. We discourage the use of hard copies to avoid the circulation of outdated versions, as we will update this document with all ongoing program requirement changes.

We will announce updates via provider notices posted to the DSCC website, with a notification email sent by your assigned Nursing Agency Liaison. The electronic version also allows users to click on links to external resources. Both PDF tabs and table-of-contents titles direct readers to the corresponding section with a single click, enabling them to quickly locate relevant guidance.

### **Important Changes to Note**

The Guidebook predominantly consists of pre-existing requirements communicated to DSCC agencies. However, this is the first time we have consolidated all requirements into one document for reference. The Guidebook also summarizes the content across all previous Provider Notices that reference requirements still applicable to Home Care agencies. While agency leadership and administration should read the Guidebook in full, there are some updates to pay particular attention to:

- **Guidelines for Nursing in the Home** have been refreshed to better reflect our population, inclusive of adults, and our family-centered mission. Agencies should begin having new staff review this version upon hire, effective the date of this Provider Notice.
- **Supervisory Summary Form** was updated with accessible formatting for easier reading, and new sections to document paid legally responsible adult (LRA) caregivers and multiple agencies providing dual staffing. Agencies may still elect to use their own supervisory form but must document paid LRAs and dual agency staffing.
- **DSCC Guidelines for Paid LRA Caregivers Form** was refreshed to encompass specific requirements and exceptions for LRA caregivers employed by agencies. Agencies must complete the attestation with the LRA upon employment and provide it to DSCC when they submit the caregiver's information for DSCC nurse verification.
- **Home Care Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) Policy:** The version in the Guidebook has been updated to reflect HFS EVV policy changes effective April 1, 2026.
- **Nursing Agency Hiring Practices:** As Medicaid providers, nursing agencies have always been responsible for their own hiring decisions and communicating those to prospective and current employees. While DSCC may restrict a nurse or CNA who does not meet program requirements from working on DSCC cases, DSCC does not bar an agency from employing healthcare workers. DSCC contact information and correspondence should no longer be shared with direct service agency employees or prospective employees, outside of agency leadership/administration.

## **Attestation of Requirements**

Compliance with DSCC policies, audit requirements, and reporting standards is crucial for maintaining agency approval and ensuring service quality. **DSCC-approved agencies must read the Guidebook and provide their signed attestation to their DSCC Liaison within 45 days of this provider notice's posting date.** Agencies will also sign new attestation forms annually during reapproval. By signing the attestation, the agency agrees necessary administrative staff have read, understand, and will follow the DSCC Nursing Agency Guidebook, as well as read and follow DSCC Provider Notices regarding Guidebook updates.

Agencies should follow up with their Liaison if questions remain after reading the Guidebook in full. This notice will also be posted to DSCC's website at <https://dscc.uic.edu/home-care-provider-notices/>. We thank you for your continued service to our shared participants. If questions arise, please contact your DSCC Nursing Agency Liaison.