



Florida  
Developmental  
Disabilities  
Council, Inc.

## Accessing Home Health Care, Nursing, and Personal Supports for Individuals who Receive Florida Medicaid and iBudget Services

*“To advocate and promote meaningful participation in all aspects of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities”*

Do you need help taking care of yourself or taking care of a family member? If you have Florida Medicaid or the iBudget Waiver you might be able to get help. Often people don't know what to ask for or don't know what services they can get. This guide is created to help you understand what assistance you might be able to get and to help you decide what to request.

### Services available for individuals under 21 years of age

Home health agencies provide nursing services, Home Health aides, Private Duty Nursing, and Personal Care Services for children under 21. If the Home Health agency is approved by Florida Medicaid as a Florida Medicaid provider, these services may be paid for by Florida Medicaid and you do not have to be on a Medicaid waiver to get these services.

People who get Florida Medicaid sometimes get their Medicaid services directly through Medicaid. This situation is called Medicaid fee-for-service or direct Medicaid. People on direct Medicaid go to a Medicaid provider and the Medicaid provider bills for the service if it is medically necessary. The provider may need to get approval from a company that works for Florida Medicaid called eQHealth to be sure that the services are medically necessary before they can provide the services. This means you must really need the medical services.

Other people who receive Florida Medicaid get their Medicaid care through managed care plans. If you get your services through a Medicaid managed care plan, your Home Health agency may need to get approval from the managed care company before they can provide some of these services.

### Home Health Visits

Florida Medicaid provides Home Health services in a person's home. Home Health visits are provided by Home Health Aides, Registered Nurses (RN), or Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN).

### Home Health Aide

Home Health Aide services are provided through the Home Health agency by persons who have had special training but are not licensed nurses. They are allowed to do activities that do not require a licensed nurse to do. Some examples of the types of help that are available through Home Health aides are listed below:

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC) is a 501(c)(3) state-wide not for profit organization federally mandated to improve the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Established in 1971, FDDC has positively impacted programs and policies throughout state and local governments resulting in sustainable services for thousands of Floridians.

- Helping change a colostomy bag.
- Helping you to transfer from a wheelchair to a bed, shower, or other surface.
- Helping to look at a bandage for a cut or sore.
- Helping you to practice moving and doing special exercises that a Registered Nurse has told you must be done.
- Helping you to prepare and measure a special diet.
- Help with teeth brushing and keeping your mouth clean if you can't do that for yourself.
- Helping you take a bath and being sure that your skin is kept in good condition.
- Helping you take medication if you know what medications you need to take but just need help with taking them.

Home Health aides can come to your home or other places in the community up to four times a day. If you need more help than that you may need Nursing Services or Personal Care Assistance. Personal Care Services are discussed more in a section below.

### Nursing Services

The type of nursing assistance provided is based on the needs of the person receiving services. Registered Nurses have a higher level of training than Licensed Practical Nurses do, so there are some duties that only Registered Nurses can do. You won't have to figure this out; your doctor and the Home Health agency will help you.

Nursing care is help that the law says must be done by trained nurses with a nursing license. Sometimes people do these things for themselves, but when they can't they need a nurse to do them. Below are examples of what nurses can help you or your family member with:

- Injections for medications if you cannot do them yourself.
- Help with putting in catheters.
- Caring for a colostomy.
- Caring for a deep sore called a decubitus ulcer or other sores and making sure that they stay clean and don't get infected.
- Helping take care of a tracheotomy or ventilator.
- Helping take care of feedings through a gastrostomy tube if you or your caregiver can't do it.

The nurses that provide this service can come one to four times a day. If you need more help than that you may need Private Duty Nursing which is discussed more below.

### Private Duty Nursing

Private Duty Nursing is a skilled nursing service that provides help from a licensed nurse for several hours a day at your home or a place in the community. The services are provided to perform skilled nursing interventions or monitor the effects of treatment. To be eligible, you or your family member must have many severe medical problems.

Florida Medicaid calls this condition "medically complex"; this means that a person has a continual disease or medical condition that keeps them from doing most things for themselves or makes them need medical care most of the time. The Private Duty Nurse can either teach a family member to help or provide services directly.

If the person receiving nursing services has a family member that is a licensed nurse in Florida and he/she wants to be the Private Duty Nurse for a family member, that person can get a job with a Home Health agency and provide the service. Or if the Home Health agency does not have a nurse available to help you, a licensed nurse who does not work for a Home Health agency can become a Florida Medicaid provider and provide the service and get paid by Medicaid.

Some children under 21 who have medically complex conditions go to a program during the day called Pediatric Prescribed Extended Care or PPEC. Even if a child is getting services during the day at a PPEC, you may be able to get Private Duty Nursing during the evening if you need it.

Some children live in Medical Foster Care. These children need a lot of medical care. Sometimes this care is more than the foster parent can do. Private Duty Nursing may be available to help the foster parents take care of the child when necessary.

Private Duty Nursing may be provided at the child's school. Some things to consider are:

- The doctor thinks that it is okay for the child to go to school.
- The school does not have the level of nursing care available to take care of the child.
- Receiving Private Duty Nursing will allow the child to go to school.

Sometimes you might not need a licensed person to help you. You may just need someone to come to your home or community to help you do things that you or your family member can't do for yourself. You may need a Home Health Aide or Personal Care Services instead.

### Personal Care Services

If you or your family member needs more help than you can get through a Home Health Aide but you don't need Private Duty Nursing, you may need Personal Care Services.

Personal Care Services provide similar types of services that the Home Health Aide provides that do not require a nurse to do them. A Personal Care Attendant can help with eating, bathing, dressing, going to the bathroom, transferring to and from a wheelchair, and helping change a catheter or colostomy bag. A Personal Care Attendant can also help with bathing, light housework, laundry, cooking, transportation, grocery shopping, paying bills, setting up medical appointments, and managing medication and money. Personal Care Services can be provided in the home and other places in the community. They can be provided at school when they are necessary for the child to go to school. The personal care assistance can be provided through a Home Health agency, an independent personal care provider, or an independent personal care provider group.

The biggest difference between Home Health Visits and Personal Care Services is the amount of help that you get. Home Health Aides can only come to your home up to four times a day. Personal Care Services can be provided for several hours a day and continually. For example, if you need help for several hours in the morning to get ready for work or school and then several hours in the evening to prepare for bed, a Personal Care Attendant can provide this kind of help.

### **How Can I Get Help?**

The services that are described in the section above require proof of Medical Necessity and Prior Authorization. Medical Necessity means that you need to show that the services are required for you or your family member to be healthy and that there are no other ways to provide the needed help. Prior Authorization means that Florida

Medicaid says that the service is medically necessary before it is provided.

If you or your family member are enrolled in a managed care company, the prior authorization must go through the managed care company. If you or your family member are not enrolled in a managed care company, then the prior authorization must go through a company called eQhealth.

#### How to get Prior Authorization

In order to get a prior authorization the following must be obtained:

- Your doctor must order the service.
- The service must be included on the doctor's approved plan for care.
- Florida Medicaid must say that it is medically necessary and they do this by giving prior authorization.

Once you or your family member have been prescribed the service, you must find an approved Home Health agency or other provider such as an independent provider for Private Duty Nursing or Personal Care Services. If you are not on a managed care plan, the Home Health agency will send the prescription and documents to eQhealth for prior authorization. For assistance, contact the Florida Medicaid Help Line at 1-877-254- 1055. If you are on a managed care plan, the provider will send the prescription to the managed care company for approval.

#### **Services available for individuals over 21 who receive iBudget services**

If you are 21 or older, you still can get most of your nursing services and Home Health services through the Florida Medicaid program. If you need Private Duty Nursing or Personal Supports like Personal Care Services, you may now get these services through the iBudget Waiver. These services will have to be approved by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) and be on your cost plan.

The Services that are on the iBudget Waiver are:

#### Skilled Nursing

Skilled Nursing is the name for the iBudget Waiver service that is just like Medicaid Home Health Visits – Nursing Services. Licensed Practical Nurses or Registered Nurses can come to your home or other places in the community to provide nursing services if you need them. For people who receive iBudget services, almost all nursing services are paid for by Florida Medicaid either directly through Medicaid as fee-for-service or through a managed care plan. This helps you or your family member because the service does not go on your iBudget cost plan.

If you or your family member are having problems getting nursing services from Medicaid, you can sometimes get nursing services from the iBudget Waiver. Your Support Coordinator can help you with this if necessary. You or your family member will have to get special approval for this. It is called getting an Exception Letter. Your Support Coordinator will have to help you get the letter.

#### Private Duty Nursing

Private Duty Nursing is available through Florida Medicaid for individuals under 21 years old. When you or your family member turn 21, Florida Medicaid will no longer pay for this service. If you or your family member still need this help, you will have to get it through the iBudget Waiver. Your doctor, ARNP, or Physician's Assistant must prescribe this service.

Private Duty Nursing through the iBudget Waiver is just like the Private Duty Nursing under Florida Medicaid. A licensed nurse can come to your home or where you are in the community and provide the type of nursing care that you need. The difference between Private Duty Nursing, Health Home Visit – Nursing, and iBudget Waiver Skilled

Nursing services is the amount of time that you or your family member need the nurse.

If a nurse can come into your home four times a day and provide what you need, then you probably don't need a Private Duty Nurse. But if you or your family member need a nurse most of the time then you probably need a Private Duty Nurse.

Also remember that if you need help with taking care of yourself or your family member, you may not need a nurse if the help you need does not require a licensed person to do it. You may be able to have Personal Supports to help you.

### Personal Supports

If you or your family member were getting Personal Care Assistance through Florida Medicaid and you are now 21 or turning 21, you will have to change your services to Personal Supports services through the iBudget Waiver. Your assistant will need to be paid by the iBudget Waiver after you turn 21 and must be an iBudget Waiver provider. Your Support Coordinator can help them figure out how to become an iBudget Waiver provider.

The Personal Supports service under the iBudget Waiver is very similar to the Personal Care services under Florida Medicaid. The Personal Support worker can help you or your family member with eating, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, and meal preparation. They also can help you or your family member with cleaning your home, washing clothes, and going into the community to shop or do other activities.

### **How do I get these services approved?**

You may be able to get Private Duty Nursing and Personal Supports approved by working with your Support Coordinator to have them included on your Support Plan and cost plan. Your Support Coordinator will help you decide which type of services you need. You can also combine services. For example, if you need nursing services only once a day, you can get them through Medicaid and can also get Personal Supports through the iBudget Waiver. For Private Duty Nursing, you must have a prescription from a doctor, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), or Physician's Assistant and have a nursing assessment that says that you need the service

*Disclaimer: The information contained in this guide is for the use of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive services through Florida Medicaid and the iBudget Waiver. Families, Providers, and Support Coordinators may also benefit from this information. No endorsement by the Agency for Healthcare Administration or the Agency for Persons with Disabilities is provided or implied. Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information provided in this guide. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. does not accept any responsibility or liability for the accuracy, content, completeness, legality, or reliability of the information contained in this guide.*

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