STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

REQUEST: March 23, 2018
[redacted]
AGENCY: MAP
FH #: 7726249K

In the Matter of the Appeal of

[redacted]

from a determination by the New York City Department of Social Services

DECISION AFTER FAIR HEARING

JURISDICTION

Pursuant to Section 22 of the New York State Social Services Law (hereinafter Social Services Law) and Part 358 of Title 18 NYCRR, (hereinafter Regulations), a fair hearing was held on April 20, 2018, in New York City, before an Administrative Law Judge. The following persons appeared at the hearing:

For the Appellant

[redacted]

For the Managed Long Term Care Plan (Centers Plan for Healthy Living)

On papers only – Centers Plan appearance waived by the Office of Administrative Hearings

ISSUE

Was the Appellant's Managed Long Term Care Plan's, Centers Plan for Healthy Living ("Centers Plan"), determination to reduce the Appellant's Personal Care Services authorization from 24 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in" to 8 hours, 7 days per week for a total of 56 hours weekly, correct?

FINDINGS OF FACT

An opportunity to be heard having been afforded to all interested parties and evidence having been taken and due deliberation having been had, it is hereby found that:

1. The Appellant, age 90 and who lives alone, has been enrolled in and has received care and services, including Personal Care Services, through a Managed Long Term Care Plan operated by Centers Plan for Healthy Living ("Centers Plan").

2. The Appellant has been in receipt of Personal Care Services in the amount of 24 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in".

3. On February 13, 2018, a nursing assessor completed a Uniform Assessment System New York (UANSY) Assessment (Comprehensive) Report of the Appellant's personal care needs.

4. By "Initial Adverse Determination" notice dated March 22, 2018, effective April 1, 2018, Centers Plan determined to reduce the Appellant's Personal Care Services authorization from 24 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in" to 8 hours, 7 days per week for a total of 56 hours weekly, on the grounds that,

"The plan is taking this action because based on the NYS Department of Health Uniform Assessment System (UAS-NY) and the plan's client tasking tool."

5. On March 23, 2018, the Appellant requested this fair hearing to contest the Managed Long Term Care Plan's determination.

APPLICABLE LAW

Part 438 of 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) pertains to provision of Medicaid medical care, services and supplies through Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs), Prepaid Ambulatory Health Plans (PAHPs) and Primary Care Case Managers (PCCMs), and the requirements for contracts for services so provided.

Section 438.210 of 42 CFR Subpart D provides, in pertinent part:

> (a) Coverage - Each contract with an MCO, PIHP, or PAHP must do the following:
>
> > (1) Identify, define, and specify the amount, duration, and scope of each service that the MCO, PIHP, or PAHP is required to offer.
> >
> > (2) Require that the services identified in paragraph (a)(1) of this section be furnished in an amount, duration, and scope that is no less than the amount, duration, and scope for the same services furnished to beneficiaries under fee-for-service Medicaid, as set forth in Sec. 440.230.
> >
> > (3) Provide that the MCO, PIHP, or PAHP--
> >
> > > (i) Must ensure that the services are sufficient in amount, duration, or scope to reasonably be expected to achieve the purpose for which the services are furnished.

(ii) May not arbitrarily deny or reduce the amount, duration, or scope of a required service solely because of diagnosis, type of illness, or condition of the beneficiary;

(iii) May place appropriate limits on a service

(A) On the basis of criteria applied under the State plan, such as medical necessity; or

(B) For the purpose of utilization control, provided the services furnished can reasonably be expected to achieve their purpose, as required in paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section; and

(4) Specify what constitutes “medically necessary services”" in a manner that:

(i) Is no more restrictive than that used in the State Medicaid program as indicated in State statutes and regulations, the State Plan, and other State policy and procedures; and

(ii) Addresses the extent to which the MCO, PIHP, or PAHP is responsible for covering services related to the following:

(A) The prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of health impairments.

(B) The ability to achieve age-appropriate growth and development.

(C) The ability to attain, maintain, or regain functional capacity.

Section 438.400 of 42 CFR Subpart F provides in part:

(a) Statutory basis. This subpart is based on sections 1902(a)(3), 1902(a)(4), and 1932(b)(4) of the Act.

(1) Section 1902(a)(3) requires that a State plan provide an opportunity for a fair hearing to any person whose claim for assistance is denied or not acted upon promptly.

(2) Section 1902(a)(4) requires that the State plan provide for methods of administration that the Secretary finds necessary for the proper and efficient operation of the plan.

(3) Section 1932(b)(4) requires Medicaid managed care organizations to establish internal grievance procedures under which Medicaid enrollees, or providers acting on their behalf, may challenge the denial of coverage of, or payment for, medical assistance.

(b) Definitions. As used in this subpart, the following terms have the indicated meanings:
In the case of an MCO or PIHP-"Action" means--

(1) The denial or limited authorization of a requested service, including the type or level of service;

(2) The reduction, suspension, or termination of a previously authorized service;

(3) The denial, in whole or in part, of payment for a service...

Section 438.402 of 42 CFR Subpart F provides in part:

(a) The grievance system. Each MCO [Managed Care Organization] and PIHP [Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan] must have a system in place, for enrollees, that includes a grievance process, an appeal process, and access to the State's fair hearing system...

Section 4403-f of the Public Health Law pertains to Managed Long Term Care Plans.

Article 49 of the Public Health Law pertains to Utilization Review and External Appeal.

Social Services Law §365-a(2) provides that "Medical assistance" shall mean payment of part or all of the cost of medically necessary medical, dental and remedial care, services and supplies, as authorized in this title or the regulations of the department, which are necessary to prevent, diagnose, correct or cure conditions in the person that cause acute suffering, endanger life, result in illness or infirmity, interfere with such person's capacity for normal activity, or threaten some significant handicap and which are furnished an eligible person in accordance with this title and the regulations of the department.

Personal care services means assistance with nutritional and environmental support functions and personal care functions, as specified in 18 NYCRR §§ 505.14(a)(5)(i)(a) and 505.14(a)(5)(ii)(a). Such services must be essential to the maintenance of the patient's health and safety in his or her own home, as determined by the social services district in accordance with Section 505.14; ordered by the attending physician; based on an assessment of the patient's needs and of the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of services specified in 18 NYCRR § 505.14(b)(3)(iv); provided by a qualified person in accordance with a plan of care; and supervised by a registered professional nurse.

Personal care services, including continuous personal care services and live-in 24-hour personal care services as defined in paragraphs (2) and (4), respectively, of this subdivision, shall not be authorized to the extent that the patient's need for assistance can be met by the following:

(1) voluntary assistance available from informal caregivers including, but not limited to, the patient's family, friends, or other responsible adult;

(2) formal services provided or funded by an entity, agency or program other than the medical assistance program; or

(3) adaptive or specialized equipment or supplies including, but not limited to, bedside commodes, urinals, walkers, and wheelchairs, when such equipment or supplies can be provided safely and cost-effectively. 18 NYCRR § 505.14(a)(3)(iii)(a)

18 NYCRR § 505.14(a)(5)

Social Services Law §365-a(2)(e)(iv) provides in part that level I personal care services shall not exceed eight hours per week for individuals whose needs are limited to nutritional and environmental support functions.

The purpose of GIS message GIS 03 MA/003 is to clarify and elaborate on the assessment of Personal Care Services pursuant to the Court's ruling in Rodriguez v. Novello and in accordance with existing Department regulations and policies.

Social services districts, including those using locally developed task based assessment (TBA) instruments, must complete a comprehensive assessment of the patient's health care needs in order to determine the patient's appropriateness for services and the amount, frequency and duration of a service authorization. Department regulations (18 N.Y.C.R.R.§ 505.14) require both a social and nursing assessment in the Personal Care Services patient assessment process.

The assessment process should evaluate and document when and to what degree the patient requires assistance with personal care services tasks and whether needed assistance with tasks can be scheduled or may occur at unpredictable times during the day or night. The assessment process should also evaluate the availability of informal supports who may be willing and available to provide assistance with needed tasks and whether the patient's day or nighttime needs can totally or partially be met through the use of efficiencies and specialized medical equipment including, but not limited to, commode, urinal, walker, wheelchair, etc.

When the district, in accordance with 505.14 (a)(4), has determined the patient is appropriate for the Personal Care Services Program, a care plan must be developed that meets the patient's scheduled and unscheduled day and nighttime personal care needs. In determining the appropriate amount of hours to authorize, the district must review the physician's order and the nursing and social assessments to assure that the authorization and scheduling of hours in

combination with any informal support contributions, efficiencies and specialized medical equipment, is sufficient to meet the patient's personal care needs.

Social services districts should authorize assistance with recognized, medically necessary personal care services tasks. As previously advised, social services districts are **NOT** required to allot time for safety monitoring as a separate task as part of the total personal care services hours authorized (see GIS 99 MA/013, GIS 99 MA/036). However, districts are reminded that a clear and legitimate distinction exists between "safety monitoring" as a non-required independent stand alone function while no Level II personal care services task is being provided, and the appropriate monitoring of the patient while providing assistance with the performance of a Level II personal care services task, such as transferring, toileting, or walking, to assure the task is being safely completed**.**

Completion of accurate and comprehensive assessments are essential to safe and adequate care plan development and appropriate service authorization. Adherence to Department assessments requirements will help assure patient quality of care and district compliance with the administration of the Personal Care Services Program.

The Department's personal care services managed care guidelines dated May 2013 advise that Managed Care Organizations should authorize some or total assistance with the recognized medically necessary personal care services tasks. Allotment of time separate and apart from the personal care tasks authorized is not required for safety monitoring. However, there is a clear and legitimate distinction between safety monitoring as a non-required stand alone function while no PCS is being provided and the appropriate level of safety monitoring while the enrollee is receiving assistance with PCS tasks such as transferring, toileting, or walking. As an example, if a member requires assistance with getting in and out of the tub and also has a condition that limits the ability to discern temperature the PCS worker would monitor the water temperature for the member as a safety measure. As another example, if a member requires assistance with walking, the PCS worker takes appropriate measures to guard the member's safety while assisting the member with the task of walking. These are but two examples of the appropriate safety monitoring that must be provided to assure that the particular Level I or Level II task is safely completed. Safety monitoring under PCS does not, however, include monitoring an individual with dementia, for example, when no other Level I or Level II personal care services task is being provided, to assure that the individual a does not wander away from home or engage in unsafe behavior. This type of safety monitoring is covered as a discrete service in the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Waiver.

Continuous personal care services means the provision of uninterrupted care, by more than one personal care aide, for more than 16 hours in a calendar day for a patient who, because of the patient's medical condition, needs assistance during such calendar day with toileting, walking, transferring, turning and positioning, or feeding and needs assistance with such frequency that a live-in 24-hour personal care aide would be unlikely to obtain, on a regular basis, five hours daily of uninterrupted sleep during the aide's eight hour period of sleep. [18 NYCRR § 505.14(a)(2)]

Live-in 24-hour personal care services means the provision of care by one personal care aide for a patient who, because of the patient's medical condition, needs assistance during a calendar day with toileting, walking, transferring, turning and positioning, or feeding and whose need for assistance is sufficiently infrequent that a live-in 24-hour personal care aide would be likely to obtain, on a regular basis, five hours daily of uninterrupted sleep during the aide's eight hour period of sleep. [18 NYCRR § 505.14(a)(4)]

The social services district may not authorize or reauthorize personal care services based upon a task-based assessment when the applicant or recipient of personal care services has been determined by the social services district or the State to be in need of 24 hour personal care, including continuous personal care services, live-in 24 hour personal care services or the equivalent provided by formal services or informal caregivers. 18 NYCRR 505.14(d)

The purpose of this GIS is to provide further instructions regarding the Mayer v. Wing court case, which applies to social services districts' reductions or discontinuations of personal care services. [Mayer v. Wing, 922 F. Supp. 902 (S.D.N.Y., 1996)]. The Mayer case is now final, and the Department is issuing these additional instructions to comply with the court's final order in this case.

Districts were first advised of the Mayer case in May, 1996. (Please refer to GIS 96 MA/019, issued May 28, 1996.) As described in that GIS message, the Mayer case prohibits social services districts from using task-based assessment plans ("TBA plans") to reduce the hours of any personal care services recipient whom the district has determined needs 24 hour care, including continuous 24 hour services ("split-shift"), 24 hour live-in services ("live-in") or the equivalent provided by informal or formal supports. This GIS message identifies the policies and procedures districts must follow in order to comply with this particular provision of the Mayer case.

This particular provision of the Mayer case applies only when the district has first determined that the MA recipient is medically eligible for split-shift or live-in services. To determine whether the recipient is medically eligible for split-shift services or live-in services, the district must continue to follow existing Department regulations and policies. As is currently required, the district must assure that the nursing and social assessments fully document and support the determination that the recipient is, or is not, medically eligible for split shift or live-in services.

When the district has determined that the MA recipient is medically eligible for split-shift or live-in services, it must next determine the availability of informal supports such as family members or friends and formal supports such as Protective Services for Adults, a certified home health agency or another agency or entity. This requirement is no different from current practice. And, as under current practice, the district must assure that the nursing and social assessments fully document and support its determination that the recipient does, or does not, have informal or formal supports that are willing and able to provide hours of care.

Remember that the contribution of family members or friends is voluntary and cannot be coerced or required in any manner whatsoever. A district may choose to implement so-called "statements of understanding" to reflect a family member's or friend's voluntary agreement to

provide hours of care to a recipient whom the district has determined is medically eligible for split shift or live-in services. (See 95 LCM-76, section III, issued July 18, 1995, for a description of statements of understanding.)

Once the district has determined that the recipient is medically eligible for split-shift or live-in services and determined whether the recipient has informal or formal supports that are willing and able to provide hours of care, the district can assure that it is complying with the Mayer case by following the appropriate guidelines set forth below:

1.Recipient is medically eligible for split-shift services but has no informal or formal supports:

The district should authorize 24 hour split shift services for this recipient if the recipient otherwise meets the fiscal assessment requirements. The district must not use a TBA plan to reduce this recipient's personal care services.

2. Recipient is medically eligible for split-shift services and has informal or formal supports:

The district should authorize services in an amount that is less than 24 hour split-shift services if the recipient otherwise meets the fiscal assessment requirements. The amount that is authorized, when combined with the amount that informal or formal supports are willing and able to provide, would equal 24 hours. The district must not use a TBA plan to reduce this recipient's services because the recipient is receiving the "equivalent" of split-shift services: part of the services are funded by the MA program and part of the services are provided by the informal or formal supports.

3. Recipient is medically eligible for live-in services but has no informal or formal supports:

The district should authorize 24 hour live-in services for this recipient if the recipient otherwise meets the fiscal assessment requirements. The district must not use a TBA plan to reduce this recipient's personal care services.

4. Recipient is medically eligible for live-in services and has formal or informal supports:

The district should authorize services in an amount that is less than 24 hour live-in services if the recipient otherwise meets the fiscal assessment requirements. The amount that is authorized, when combined with the amount that the informal or formal supports are willing and able to provide, would equal 24 hours. The district must not use a TBA plan to reduce this recipient's services because the recipient is receiving the "equivalent" of live-in services: part of the services are funded by the MA program and part of the services are provided by the informal or formal supports.

The Department’s managed care personal care services guidelines dated May 2013 advise that the MCO may not authorize or reauthorize personal care services based upon a *task-based* assessment when the member has been determined by the MCO to be in need of 24 hour personal care services, including continuous (split-shift or multi-shift) care, 24 hour live-in care or the equivalent provided by a formal or informal caregivers. The determination of the need for 24 hour personal care, including continuous (split-shift or multi-shift) care, shall be made

without regard to the availability of formal or informal caregivers to assist in the provision of such care.

According to GIS 01 MA/ 044 "… the new regulations provide that one reason for reducing or discontinuing personal care services is "the client's medical, mental, economic or social circumstances have changed and the district determines that the personal care services provided under the last authorization or reauthorization are no longer appropriate or can be provided in fewer hours than they were previously" [18 NYCRR 505.14 (b)(5)(v)(c)(1)]. Consistent with the Court ruling in Mayer, the State requires that client notices citing this reason for reducing or discontinuing services must identify the specific medical, mental, social or economic change in the client's circumstances that justifies the proposed reduction or discontinuation in services. The client notice must explain why the change in the client's circumstances results in the need for fewer hours of services."

The GIS also provides "Districts are reminded that State policy, as reflected in the new regulations, requires that when districts determine to reduce, discontinue or deny personal care services, the client notice must identify the specific reason (whether a prior mistake in the authorization, the client's refusal to cooperate with the required assessment or other specific reason set forth in the regulations) that justifies the action. The client notice must also explain why the cited circumstance or event necessitates the reduction, discontinuance or denial of services."

GIS message GIS 96 MA/019 advises of a federal court decision that applies to social services districts' reductions or discontinuations of personal care services. [Mayer et al. v. Wing, (S.D.N.Y.)] In general, the Mayer decision holds that a social services district must have a legitimate reason to reduce or discontinue a recipient's personal care services. Before reducing or discontinuing personal care services, the district must individually assess the recipient to determine whether the reduction or discontinuance is justified by State law or Department regulation. A social services district cannot reduce or discontinue a recipient's personal care services arbitrarily, capriciously or as part of a blanket, across-the-board reduction or discontinuance of services that does not consider each individual recipient's particular circumstances. This general principle is entirely consistent with the Department's policy.

The social services district must notify the client in writing of its decision to authorize, reauthorize, increase, decrease, discontinue or deny personal care services on forms required by the department. The client is entitled to a fair hearing and to have such services continued unchanged until the fair hearing decision is issued (aid-continuing) in accordance with the requirements outlined in Part 358 of this Title. 18 NYCRR 505.14(b)(5)(v)(b)

The social services district's determination to deny, reduce or discontinue personal care services must be stated in the client notice.

The Department's Managed Care Personal Care Services Guidelines dated May 2013 advise that requests for PCS must be reviewed for benefit coverage and medical necessity of the service in accordance with PHL Article 49, 18 NYCRR §505.14 (a), the MMC Model Contract and these

guidelines. As such, denial or reduction in services must clearly indicate a clinical rationale that shows review of the enrollee's specific clinical data and medical condition; the basis on which request was not medically necessary or does not meet specific benefit coverage criteria; and be sufficient to enable judgment for possible appeal. If the determination results in a termination or reduction, the reason for denial must clearly state what circumstances or condition has changed to warrant reduction or termination of previously approved services.

The authorization determination notice, whether adverse or not, must include the number of hours per day, the number of hours per week, and the personal care services function (Level I/Level II):

i. that were previously authorized, if any;
ii. that were requested by the Enrollee or his/her designee, if so specified in the request;
iii. that are authorized for the new authorization period; and
iv. the original authorization period and the new authorization period, as applicable.

All notices must reflect the reasons for reduction, discontinuation or denial of a reauthorization for PCS. Appropriate reasons for reducing, discontinuing or denying a reauthorization of personal care services include but are not limited to:

1. the client's medical, mental, economic or social circumstances have changed and the MCO determines that the personal care services provided under the last authorization or reauthorization are no longer appropriate or can be provided in fewer hours than they were previously;
2. a mistake occurred in the previous personal care services authorization;
3. the member refused to cooperate with the required assessment of services;
4. a technological development renders certain services unnecessary or less time consuming;
5. the member can be more appropriately and cost-effectively served through other Medicaid programs and services;
6. the member's health and safety cannot be reasonably assured with the provision of personal care services;
7. the member's medical condition is not stable;
8. the member is not self-directing and has no one to assume those responsibilities;
9. the services the member needs exceed the personal care aide's scope of practice

Reasons to deny personal care services must be reflected in the notices and include but are not limited to: :

(i) the client's health and safety cannot be assured with the provision of personal care services. The notice must identify the reason or reasons that the client's health and safety cannot be assured with the provision of personal care services;
(ii) the client's medical condition is not stable. The notice must identify the client's medical condition that is not stable;
(iii) the client is not self-directing and has no one to assume those responsibilities;
(iv) the services the client needs exceed the personal care aide's scope of practice. The notice must identify the service or services that the client needs that exceeds the personal care aide's scope of practice;

(v) the client refused to cooperate in the required assessment;
(vi) a technological development, which the notice must identify, renders certain services unnecessary or less time-consuming 18 NYCRR 505.14(b)(5)(v)(c)(1)

Reasons to reduce or discontinue personal care services must be reflected in the notices and include but are not limited to: :

(i) the client's medical or mental condition or economic or social circumstances have changed and the district determines that the personal care services provided under the last authorization or reauthorization are no longer appropriate or can be provided in fewer hours. For proposed discontinuances, this includes but is not limited to cases in which: the client's health and safety can no longer be assured with the provision of personal care services; the client's medical condition is no longer stable; the client is no longer self-directing and has no one to assume those responsibilities; or the services the client needs exceed the personal care aide's scope of practice. The notice must identify the specific change in the client's medical or mental condition or economic or social circumstances from the last authorization or reauthorization and state why the services should be reduced or discontinued as a result of the change;
(ii) a mistake occurred in the previous personal care services authorization or reauthorization. The notice must identify the specific mistake that occurred in the previous authorization or reauthorization and state why the prior services are not needed as a result of the mistake;
(iii) the client refused to cooperate in the required reassessment;
(iv) a technological development, which the notice must identify, renders certain services unnecessary or less time-consuming;
(v) the client resides in a facility or participates in another program or receives other services, which the notice must identify, which are responsible for the provision of needed personal care services; and
(vi) the client can be more appropriately and cost-effectively served through other Medicaid programs and services, which the notice must identify. 18 NYCRR 505.14(b)(5)(v)(c)(2)

MLTC Policy 15.04: Interim Guidance for MLTC Partial Capitation Appeal Notices advises in part:
Within Section 1.B. of Appendix K of the Partial Capitation Model Contract, there are four required notice templates relating to Expedited and Standard Appeals. This document describes how these notices will be affected by the elimination of the exhaustion requirement for internal appeals.
This guidance is effective immediately and will also be reflected in the forthcoming renewal of the partial capitation contracts for the period between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2016.
Notice Template 4:
To reflect the elimination of the internal appeal exhaustion requirement, and related policy changes, plan appeal final determination notices must comply with the following:
Final Determination Notices
The Contractor shall ensure that all notices are in writing and in easily understood language and are accessible to non-English speaking and visually impaired enrollees. Notices shall include that

oral interpretation and alternate formats of written material for enrollees with special needs are available and how to access the alternate formats.
All notices must include up-to-date contact information for the Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN), along with the following statement: "You can also call the Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) to get free, independent advice about your coverage, complaints, and appeals' options. They can help you manage the appeal process. Contact ICAN to learn more about their services:"
A) Notice to the enrollee of Action Appeal Determinations shall be dated and include:
1) Date the action appeal was filed and a summary of the action appeal;
2) Date the action appeal process was completed;
3) The results and the reasons for the determination, including the clinical rationale, if any;
4) If the determination was not wholly in favor of the enrollee, and:
a) The contractor upheld its original action, a statement that reminds the enrollee of their right to request a fair hearing, including:
i) That a request for a fair hearing must have been made to the State within 60 calendar days of the initial action notice;
ii) The date by which such request must have been made; and
iii) If time remains for a fair hearing to be requested, instructions on how to request a fair hearing; or a statement that time to request a fair hearing has expired.
b) The contractor modified its original action in any way, a statement that the action appeal determination constitutes a new action, and the enrollee has a right to request a fair hearing, including:
i) That a request for a fair hearing must be made to the State within 60 calendar days of the date of the action appeal notice; and
ii) A completed NYSDOH standard "Managed Long Term Care Action Taken" notice for denial of benefits or for termination or reduction in benefits, as applicable, containing the enrollee's fair hearing and aid continuing rights.
5) The right of the enrollee to contact the New York State Department of Health regarding his or her complaint, including the NYSDOH's toll-free number for complaints; and
6) For action appeals involving personal care services, the number of hours per day, number of hours per week, and the personal care services function (Level I/Level II):
a) That were previously authorized, if any;
b) That were requested by the enrollee or their designee, if so specified in the request;
c) That are authorized for the new authorization period, if any; and
d) The original authorization period and the new authorization period, as applicable.
7) For action appeals involving medical necessity or an experimental or investigational treatment, the notice must also include:
a) A clear statement that the notice constitutes the final adverse determination and specifically use the terms "medical necessity" or "experimental/investigational;"
b) The enrollee's coverage type;
c) The procedure in question, and if available and applicable the name of the provider and developer/manufacturer of the health care service;
d) Statement that the enrollee is eligible to file an external appeal and the timeframe for filing, and if the action appeal was expedited, a statement that the enrollee may choose to file a standard action appeal with the contractor or file an external appeal;

e) A copy of the "Standard Description and Instructions for Health Care Consumers to Request an External Appeal" and the External Appeal application form;
f) The contractor's contact person and telephone number;
g) The contact person, telephone number, company name and full address of the utilization review agent, if the determination was made by the agent; and
h) If the contractor has a second level internal review process, the notice shall contain instructions on how to file a second level action appeal and a statement in bold text that the timeframe for requesting an external appeal begins upon receipt of the final adverse determination of the first level action appeal, regardless of whether or not a second level of action appeal is requested, and that by choosing to request a second level action appeal, the time may expire for the enrollee to request an external appeal.

At a fair hearing concerning the denial of an application for or the adequacy of Public Assistance, Medical Assistance, HEAP, SNAP benefits or services, the appellant must establish that the agency's denial of assistance or benefits was not correct or that the appellant is eligible for a greater amount of assistance or benefits. Except where otherwise established by law or regulation, in fair hearings concerning the discontinuance, reduction or suspension of Public Assistance, Medical Assistance, SNAP benefits or services, the social services agency must establish that its actions were correct. 18 NYCRR 358-5.9(a).

Regulations at 18 NYCRR 358-3.7(a) provide that an appellant has the right to examine the contents of the case record at the fair hearing. At the fair hearing, the agency is required to provide complete copies of its documentary evidence to the hearing officer. In addition, such documents must be provided to the appellant and appellant's authorized representative where such documents were not provided otherwise to the appellant or appellant's authorized representative in accordance with 18 NYCRR 358-3.7. 18 NYCRR 358-4.3(a). In addition, a representative of the agency must appear at the hearing along with the case record and a written summary of the case and be prepared to present evidence in support of its determination. 18 NYCRR 358-4.3(b

DISCUSSION

The hearing record establishes that by "Initial Adverse Determination" notice dated March 22, 2018, effective April 1, 2018, Centers Plan for Healthy Living ("Centers Plan") determined to reduce the Appellant's Personal Care Services authorization from 24 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in" to 8 hours, 7 days per week for a total of 56 hours weekly, on the grounds that,

"The plan is taking this action because based on the NYS Department of Health Uniform Assessment System (UAS-NY) and the plan's client tasking tool."

In a relevant stage of Mayer v. Wing, agencies (including Managed Long Term Care Plans) were enjoined from reducing Personal Care Services, unless a Notice was issued including prescribed language. This injunction was incorporated into 18 NYCRR Section 505.14, and now applies as well to discontinuance. The approved reasons set forth in the amended Regulation, based upon the injunction in Mayer, are:

(1) the client's medical, mental, economic or social circumstances have changed and the district determines that the personal care services provided under the last authorization or reauthorization are no longer appropriate or can be provided in fewer hours than they were previously;

(2) a mistake occurred in the previous personal care services authorization;

(3) the client refused to cooperate with the required assessment of services;

(4) a technological development renders certain services unnecessary or less time consuming;

(5) the client can be more appropriately and cost-effectively served through other Medicaid programs and services;

(6) the client's health and safety cannot be assured with the provision of personal care services;

(7) the client's medical condition is not stable;

(8) the client is not self-directing and has no one to assume those responsibilities;

(9) the services the client needs exceed the personal care aide's scope of practice; and

(10) the client resides in a facility or participates in another program or receives other services which are responsible for the provision of needed personal care services.

It must be emphasized that Federal regulations require that the State's contracts with managed long term plans must provide, among other things, that the services the managed long term care plan offer be furnished in an "amount, duration and scope" that is no less than the "amount, duration and scope" for the same services furnished to Medicaid fee-for-service recipients and that the managed long care plan may place appropriate limits on services on the basis of medical necessity, but the criteria for determining medical necessity may be no more restrictive than that applicable to fee-for-service recipients. The due process requirement for an adequate a Notice is equally applicable to Managed Long Term Care Plans as it is applicable to Medicaid fee-for-service recipients

Centers Plan's notice by no means follows these guidelines. The March 22, 2018 notice states "…based on the most recent UAS-NY comprehensive assessment conducted on 2/13/18 reflecting your current needs, your PCA services will be decreased from (twenty-four hour live-in services (24/7 live-in) to eight (8) hours per day, seven (7) days per week (Totaling fifty-six (56) hours per week…. However, the guidelines state that the notice should clearly address how the client's medical or mental condition or economic or social circumstances have changed and thus, the personal care services provided under the last authorization or reauthorization are no longer appropriate or can be provided in fewer hours. Centers Plan does not state in the Notice what those changes were and how any changes impacted the hours authorized from a prior authorization. Centers Plan only stated that the reduction was because the Appellant had been provided the 12 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in" as a continuity of pre-existing service

plan prior to Appellant's enrollment with Centers Plan.

Centers Plan provided as a basis of its determination the February 13, 2018 Uniform Assessment System New York (UANSY) Assessment (Comprehensive) Report of the Appellant's personal care needs. The submitted assessment clearly does not support Centers Plan determination in this case. According to the February 13, 2018 UASNY assessment, "Change in Appellant's ADL status as compared to 90 days ago or since last assessment if less than 90 days ago" indicates "No change." "Overall self-sufficiency of Appellant as compared to 90 days ago or since last assessment if less than 90 days ago," also indicates "No change."

The record does not support the determination of Centers Plan to reduce Appellant's personal care services authorization.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Appellant's Managed Long Term Care Plan, Centers Plan, determination to reduce the Appellant's Personal Care Services authorization from 24 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in" to 8 hours, 7 days per week for a total of 56 hours weekly, was not correct and is reversed.

1. Centers Plan is directed to restore the Appellant's Personal Care Services authorization to the amount of 24 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in".

2. Centers Plan is directed to continue to provide the Appellant with a Personal Care Services authorization in the amount of 24 hours per day, 7 days a week "live-in".

Should Centers Plan in the future determine to implement its previous action, it is directed to procure and review the Appellant's case record, to issue a new, timely, and adequate Notice of Intent that is Mayer's compliant, and to produce the complete case record at any subsequent fair hearing.

Should Centers Plan need additional information from the Appellant in order to comply with the above directives, it is directed to notify the Appellant and the Appellant's Representative promptly in writing as to what documentation is needed. If such information is required, the Appellant or the Appellant's Representative must provide it to Centers Plan promptly to facilitate such compliance.

As required by Section 358-6.4 of the Regulations, Centers Plan must comply immediately with the directives set forth above.

DATED: Albany, New York
05/18/2018

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

By

Commissioner's Designee