

STATE OF NEW YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

REQUEST: November 7, 2018

AGENCY: MAP

FH #: 7857511J

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In the Matter of the Appeal of	:
	: <b>DECISION</b>
	<b>AFTER</b>
	: <b>FAIR</b>
	<b>HEARING</b>
from a determination by the New York City	:
Department of Social Services	:

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**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 December 3, 2018, in New York City, before an Administrative Law Judge. The following persons appeared at the hearing:

For the Appellant



For the Medicaid Managed Long Term Care plan

Julia Rolffot, Manager of Appeals and Grievances

**ISSUE**

Was the determination of the Medicaid Managed Long Term Care plan, Center's Plan for Healthy Living, to deny the Appellant's request for an authorization to increase the Appellant's Personal Care Services, from 38.5 hours per week (5.5 hours per day x 7 days) to 24-hour, continuous ("split-shift") care (168 hours per week), and to authorize a partial approval of an increase in Personal Care Services to fifty-nine (59) hours per week (8.5 hours per day x 7 days) correct with regard to the adequacy of Personal Care Services?

**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, has been in receipt of a Medical Assistance, Medicaid, authorization and is enrolled in a Managed Long-Term Care plan with Centers Plan for Healthy Living (hereinafter "the Plan").

2. The Appellant had been in receipt of an authorization of Personal Care Services in the amount of 38.5 hours per week (5.5 hours per day x 7 days).

3. The Appellant requested that the Plan authorize an increase in Personal Care Services to twenty-four (24) hour daily care via “split-shift” services (168 hours per week).

4. On September 12, 2018, a registered nursing assessor conducted a Uniform Assessment System (“UAS”) assessment of the Appellant’s personal care needs.

5. The nurse assessor reported that the Appellant requires the following level of assistance with the following activities of daily living: total dependence with meal preparation, ordinary housework, managing medications, stairs, shopping, transportation, walking, locomotion, and toilet use; maximal assistance with managing finances, bathing, dressing lower body and toilet transfer; extensive assistance with personal hygiene, dressing upper body and bed mobility; limited assistance with phone use and eating.

6. The nurse assessor reported that the Appellant has experienced a decline in her activities of daily living status as compared to 90 days ago and that her overall self-sufficiency has changed significantly as compared to her status 90 days ago (deteriorated status).

7. The Appellant’s diagnosed medical conditions include age-related cognitive decline, diabetes, dependence on wheelchair, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, dizziness, abnormalities of gait and mobility, fatigue, pain, spinal stenosis, transient cerebral ischemic attack, tremor, atrial fibrillation, osteoarthritis, and urgency of urination.

8. By Initial Adverse Determination, dated September 24, 2018, the Plan determined to deny the request for an authorization to increase the Appellant’s Personal Care Services to twenty-four (24) daily care via “split-shift” services, but to also approve a partial increase of services to 59.5 hours per week (8.5 hours per day x 7 days).

9. On or about September 27, 2018, the Appellant’s daughter appealed the Plan’s September 24, 2018 determination.

10. By written Final Adverse Determination Denial Notice the Plan upheld via Final Adverse Determination dated October 1, 2018.

11. The Appellant is currently authorized to receive 59.5 hours per week (8.5 hours per day x 7 days per week) in Personal Care Services.

12. On August 20, 2018, a fair hearing request was made in this matter.

**APPLICABLE LAW**

Section 358-5.9 of the Regulations provides that, at a fair hearing concerning the denial of an application for or the adequacy of Medical Assistance 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.

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.
- (b) Authorization of services. For the processing of requests for initial and continuing authorizations of services, each contract must require:
  - (1) That the MCO, PIHP, or PAHP and its subcontractors have in place, and follow, written policies and procedures.
  - (2) That the MCO, PIHP, or PAHP:
    - (i) Have in effect mechanisms to ensure consistent application of review criteria for authorization decisions; and
    - (ii) Consult with the requesting provider when appropriate.
  - (3) That any decision to deny a service authorization request or to authorize a service in an amount, duration, or scope that is less than requested, be made by a health care professional who has appropriate clinical expertise in treating the enrollee's condition or disease....

Section 438.236 of 42 CFR Subpart D provides, in pertinent part:

- (a) Basic rule: The State must ensure, through its contracts, that each MCO and, when applicable, each PIHP and PAHP meets the requirements of this section.
- (b) Adoption of practice guidelines. Each MCO and, when applicable, each PIHP and PAHP adopts practice guidelines that meet the following requirements:
  - (1) Are based on valid and reliable clinical evidence or a consensus of health care professionals in the particular field.
  - (2) Consider the needs of the MCO's, PIHP's, or PAHP's enrollees.
  - (3) Are adopted in consultation with contracting health care professionals.
  - (4) Are reviewed and updated periodically as appropriate.
- (c) Dissemination of guidelines. Each MCO, PIHP, and PAHP disseminates the guidelines to all affected providers and, upon request, to enrollees and potential enrollees.
- (d) Application of guidelines. Decisions for utilization management, enrollee education, coverage of services, and other areas to which the guidelines apply are consistent with the guidelines.

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 438.404(b) of 42 CFR Subpart F provides in part:

- (b) Content of notice. The notice must explain the following:
  - (1) The action the MCO or PIHP or its contractor has taken or intends to take;
  - (2) The reasons for the action...

Section 505.14(a)(1) of the Regulations defines "Personal Care Services" to mean 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.

Section 505.14(a) of the Regulations provides in part that Personal Care Services shall include the following two levels of care, and be provided in accordance with the following standards:

- (i) Level I shall be limited to the performance of nutritional and environmental support functions.

Note: Effective April 1, 2011 Social Services Law §365-a(2)(e)(iv), which is reflected in this regulation, was amended to provide that personal care services pursuant to this paragraph shall not exceed eight hours per week for individuals whose needs are limited to nutritional and environmental support functions.

- (ii) Level II shall include the performance of nutritional and environmental support functions and personal care functions.
  - (a) Personal care functions shall include some or total assistance with the following:
    - (1) bathing of the patient in the bed, the tub or in the shower;
    - (2) dressing;
    - (3) grooming, including care of hair, shaving and ordinary care of nails, teeth and mouth;
    - (4) toileting; this may include assisting the patient on and off the bedpan, commode or toilet;
    - (5) walking, beyond that provided by durable medical equipment, within the home and outside the home;
    - (6) transferring from bed to chair or wheelchair;
    - (7) preparing meals in accordance with modified diets, including low sugar, low fat, low salt and low residue diets;
    - (8) feeding;
    - (9) administration of medication by the patient, including prompting the patient as to time, identifying the medication for the patient, bringing the medication and any necessary supplies or equipment to the patient, opening the container for the patient, positioning the patient for medication and administration, disposing of used supplies and materials and storing the medication properly;
    - (10) providing routine skin care;
    - (11) using medical supplies and equipment such as walkers and wheelchairs; and
    - (12) changing of simple dressings.

When the district, in accordance with 505.14(a)(4), 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. 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.

In Rodriguez v. City of New York, 197 F. 3rd 611 (Federal Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit

1999), cert. denied 531 U.S. 864, the Plaintiffs were Personal Care Services recipients who alleged that they would be in receipt of inadequate service not meeting legal requirements, without the provision of safety monitoring as an independent task in their Personal Care Services authorizations. The district court had ruled in favor of the Plaintiffs, but the Court of Appeals held that the Agency is not required to provide safety monitoring as an independent Personal Care Services task in evaluating the needs of applicants for and recipients of Personal Care Services. Local Agencies were advised of this decision in GIS message 99/MA/036.

Pursuant to GIS 03 MA/003, task based assessments must be developed which meet the scheduled and unscheduled day and nighttime needs of recipients of Personal Care Services. This GIS was promulgated 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. 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.

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 Medical 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.

Section 505.14(a)(4) of the Regulations provides that 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.

Section 505.14(a)(2) of the Regulations provides that 24 hour continuous personal care services ("split shift") 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.

MLTC Policy 16.07 provides, in pertinent part:

Plans cannot use task-based assessment tools to authorize or reauthorize services for enrollees who need 24-hour services, including continuous services, live-in 24-hour services, or the equivalent provided by formal services or informal caregivers. The reason for this is that task-based assessment tools generally quantify the amount of time that is determined necessary for the completion of particular IADLs or ADLs and the frequency of that assistance, rather than reflect assistance that may be needed on a more continuous or "as needed" basis, such as might occur when an enrollee's medical condition causes the enrollee to have frequent or recurring needs for assistance during the day or night. A task-based assessment tool may thus be suitable for use for enrollees who are not eligible for 24-hour services but is inappropriate for enrollees who are eligible for 24-hour care.

All plans, including those that use task-based assessment tools, must evaluate and document when and to what extent the enrollee requires assistance with IADLs and ADLs and whether needed assistance can be scheduled or may occur at unpredictable times during the day or night. All plans must assure that the plan of care that is developed can meet any unscheduled or recurring daytime or nighttime needs that the enrollee may have for assistance. The plan must first determine whether the enrollee, because of the enrollee's medical condition, would be otherwise eligible for PCS or CDPAS, including continuous or live-in 24-hour services. For enrollees who would be otherwise eligible for services, the plan must then determine whether, and the extent to which, the enrollee's need for assistance can be met by voluntary assistance from informal caregivers, by formal services, or by adaptive or specialized equipment or supplies.

MLTC Policy 15.09 provides, in pertinent part:

Services shall not be authorized to the extent that the individual's need for assistance can be met by voluntary assistance from informal caregivers, by formal services other than the Medicaid program, or by adaptive or specialized equipment or supplies that can be provided safely and cost-effectively.

## **DISCUSSION**

The uncontroverted evidence in this case establishes that the Appellant had been in receipt of an authorization of Personal Care Services in the amount of thirty-eight and one-half (38.5) hours per week (5.5 hours per day x 7 days) and that she and her advocates made a request that Center's Plan for Healthy Living provide her with an authorization of twenty-four (24) daily care via "split-shift" services (168 hours per week). The record also establishes that the Plan determined to deny the Appellant's request for "split-shift" services and determined, instead, to authorize a partial approval of an increase in Personal Care Services to fifty-nine (59) hours per week (8.5 hours per day x 7 days). The Plan determined to deny "split-shift" services on the grounds that the Appellant's request lacks medical necessity.



It is undisputed by the parties that the Appellant's diagnosed medical conditions include age-related cognitive decline, diabetes, dependence on wheelchair, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, abnormalities of gait and mobility, dizziness, fatigue, pain, spinal stenosis, transient cerebral ischemic attack, tremor, atrial fibrillation, osteoarthritis, and urgency of urination.

With regard to the Appellant's need for assistance with Activities of Daily Living (hereinafter "ADLs"), the Appellant's daughter testified at the hearing that she requested a PCS authorization of 24-hour daily "split-shift" services because the Appellant is unable to perform her ADL's without the assistance of others, has extensive toileting needs due to incontinence, and requires "4-5 diaper changes per night." In support of this contention, the Appellant's daughter submitted into evidence letters from the Appellant's physicians which, upon review, advise of the following: that the Appellant "recently suffered a stroke" and "has been immobile since April 13, 2016;" the Appellant "requires maximum assist for bed mobility and transitional movements such as supine to sit and sit to stand;" the Appellant "presents with poor trunk control and agility;" and the Appellant's "balance is poor in standing and needs contact guard." Review of the Plan's September 10, 2018 UAS assessment shows that same supports the testimony of the Appellant's daughter, as it reports that the Appellant requires assistance with bathing, personal hygiene, dressing upper and lower body, walking, locomotion, bed mobility, and toileting (use and transfer). The UAS also reports that the Appellant is incontinent; suffers from abnormalities of gait and mobility; experiences dizziness and giddiness; and is unable to finish normal day-to-day activities due to shortness of breath.

The evidence as presented by the parties in this matter has been carefully reviewed and the respective contentions of the parties has been fully considered. Based on the evidence as adduced at this fair hearing, the record establishes that the Appellant, an extremely aged person, has care needs sufficient to warrant the provision of 24-hour daily care via "split shift," constant care, services. The evidence establishes that the Appellant requires extensive scheduled and unscheduled assistance during a calendar day with tasks such as toileting, walking and transferring. Section 505.14(a)(4) of the Regulations provides that live-in 24-hour PCS 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. Accordingly, the Appellant's documented care needs establish that the Appellant qualifies for 24-hour care. However, since the Appellant's extensive need for assistance at night would not allow a 24-hour, live-in PCA to receive 5 hours of uninterrupted sleep in an 8-hour sleep period, a 24-hour, live-in PCS Authorization would be inappropriate.

Based on the foregoing, the Plan's determination cannot be sustained.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The determination by Center's Plan for Healthy Living to deny the Appellant's request for an authorization to increase the Appellant's Personal Care Services to twenty-four (24) hour, daily care via "split-shift" (continuous) services is not correct and is reversed.

FH# 7857511J

Centers Plan for Healthy Living is directed to:

1. Immediately provide the Appellant with an authorization of Personal Care Services in the amount of twenty-four (24) hour care via “split-shift” services.
2. Continue to provide the Appellant with an authorization of Personal Care Services in the amount of twenty-four (24) hour care via “split-shift” unchanged.

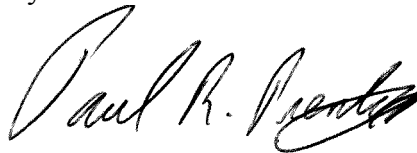
Should Centers Plan for Healthy Living need additional information from the Appellant in order to comply with the above directives, it is directed to notify the Appellant promptly in writing as to what documentation is needed. If such information is requested, the Appellant must provide it to the Plan promptly to facilitate such compliance.

As required by 18 NYCRR 358-6.4, Centers Plan for Healthy Living must comply immediately with the directives set forth above.

DATED: Albany, New York  
01/04/2019

NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul R. Prentiss", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Commissioner's Designee