


STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

REQUEST: March 27, 2018

AGENCY: Westchester
FH #: 7728192R

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| In the Matter of the Appeal of | : |
|  | : DECISION |
| | AFTER |
| | : FAIR |
| | HEARING |
| | : |
| from a determination by the Westchester County Department of Social Services | |

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 17, 2018, in Westchester County, before an Administrative Law Judge. The following persons appeared at the hearing:

For the Appellant



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

Managed Long Term Care Plan appearance waived by the Office of Administrative Hearings

ISSUE

Was the determination of the Appellant's Managed Long Term Care Plan, Centers Plan for Healthy Living, to deny the request made on behalf of the Appellant for an increase in Personal Care Service hours from 56 hours weekly, to a 24-hour split-shift schedule 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 92, has been enrolled in, and has received care and services, including Personal Care Services, through a Managed Long Term Care health plan operated by Centers Plan for Healthy Living (hereinafter "CPHL").

2. The Appellant has been in receipt of a Personal Care Services authorization in the amount of 8 hours per day, 7 days per week, totaling 56 hours weekly.

3. In, or about, February 2018, a request was made on behalf of the Appellant for an increase in Personal Care Services from 56 hours per week to a 24-hour split-shift service schedule.

4. On February 22, 2018, a nursing assessor completed a Uniform Assessment System – New York (Comprehensive) Report (hereinafter “UASNY”) of the Appellant’s personal care needs and recommended that the Appellant continue to receive Personal Care Services in the amount of 8 hours per day, 7 days per week.

5. By notice dated March 20, 2018, CPHL advised the Appellant of its determination to deny the request made on behalf of the Appellant for a 24-hour split-shift service schedule on the grounds that there was no change in the Appellant’s abilities to perform her Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of daily living.

6. On March 27, 2018, the Appellant requested this fair hearing.

APPLICABLE LAW

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. Such services must be essential to the maintenance of the patient’s health and safety in his or her own home....”.

- (2) **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.

- (4) **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.

(5) 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.

(b) The authorization for Level I services shall not exceed eight hours per week.

(ii) Level II shall include the performance of nutritional and environmental support functions and personal care functions.

(a) Personal care functions include 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) turning and positioning
- (8) preparing meals in accordance with modified diets, including low sugar, low fat, low salt and low residue diets;
- (9) feeding;
- (10) 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;

- (11) providing routine skin care;
- (12) using medical supplies and equipment such as walkers and wheelchairs; and
- (13) changing of simple dressings.

Section 505.14(b) of the Regulations provides that when a social services district receives a request for personal care services, it must determine whether the individual is eligible for Medical Assistance. The initial authorization for services shall be based on :

- a physician's order from the patient's physician based on the patient's current medical status as determined by a medical examination within 30 days of the request for Personal Care Services;
- a social assessment which must include a discussion with the patient to determine perception of his/her circumstances and preferences, an evaluation of the potential contribution of informal caregivers, such as family and friends, to the patient's care, and consideration of the number and kind of informal caregivers available to the patient, ability and motivation of informal caregivers to assist in care, extent of informal caregivers' potential involvement, availability of informal caregivers for future assistance, and acceptability to the patient of the informal caregivers' involvement in his/her care. The social assessment is completed by the Agency. When live-in 24-hour personal care services is indicated, the social assessment shall evaluate whether the patient's home has adequate sleeping accommodations for a personal care aide.
- a nursing assessment. The nursing assessment is completed by a nurse from a certified home health agency or by a nurse employed by the local social services department or by a nurse employed by a voluntary or proprietary agency under contract with the local social services department. The nursing assessment must be completed within 5 working days of the request and must include the following:
 - (1) a review and interpretation of the physician's order;
 - (2) the primary diagnosis code;
 - (3) an evaluation of the functions and tasks required by the patient;
 - (4) the degree of assistance required for each function and task;

- (5) an evaluation whether adaptive or specialized equipment or supplies including, but not limited to, bedside commodes, urinals, walkers and wheelchairs, can meet the patient's need for assistance with personal care functions, and whether such equipment or supplies can be provided safely and cost-effectively.
 - (6) the development of a plan of care in collaboration with the patient or his/her representative; and
 - (7) recommendations for authorization of services.
- an assessment of the patient's appropriateness for hospice services and an assessment of the appropriateness and cost effectiveness of using adaptive or specialized medical equipment or supplies covered by the Medicaid Program including, but not limited to, bedside commodes, urinals, walkers, wheelchairs and insulin pens; and

Where there is a disagreement between the physician's order and the social, nursing and other required assessments, or there is a question about the level and amount of services to be provided, or if the case involves the provision of continuous Personal Care Services or live-in 24-hour personal care services as defined in paragraph (a)(2) and (a)(4), respectively, of this section, an independent medical review of the case must be completed by the local professional director, by a physician designated by the local professional director, or by a physician under contract with the Agency to review personal care services cases, who shall make the final determination about the level and amount of care to be provided.

Section 505.14(a)(3)(iii) of the regulations provides that 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

GIS 12 MA/026 provides as follows concerning the availability of 24 hour, split-shift personal care services in connection with the case of Strouchler v. Shah:

It is the Department's policy that 24-hour split-shift care should be authorized only when a person's nighttime needs cannot be met by a live-in aide or through either or both of the following: (1) adaptive or specialized equipment or supplies including, but not limited to, bedside commodes, urinals, walkers, wheelchairs, and insulin pens, when the social services district

determines that such equipment or supplies can be provided safely and cost-effectively; and (2) voluntary assistance available from informal caregivers or formal services provided by an entity or agency.

When a person's nighttime needs cannot be met by the use of adaptive or specialized equipment or supplies or voluntary assistance from informal caregivers or formal services, a determination must be made whether the person needs 24-hour split-shift care (included within the regulatory definition of "continuous personal care services") or live-in 24-hour personal care services. Under Section 505.14, this depends on whether the person needs "some" or "total" assistance with toileting, walking, transferring, or feeding, and whether these needs are "frequent" or "infrequent", and able to be "scheduled" or "predicted".

The intent of the regulation is to allow the identification of situations in which a person's needs can be met by a live-in aide and still allow the aide to have an uninterrupted five hours for sleeping. The Department is considering changes to the regulations to better achieve this goal.

In the meantime, the Department provides the following clarifications:

1. The fact that a person's needs are predictable does not preclude the receipt of 24-hour split-shift care, if the person has a documented medical need for the tasks to be performed with a frequency that would not allow a live-in aide to perform them and still obtain an uninterrupted five hours of sleep.

2. The need for turning and positioning and/or the need for diaper changes, by themselves, neither preclude nor justify the receipt of 24-hour split-shift care. In order to receive 24-hour split-shift care, the person must have a documented medical need for those tasks to be performed so frequently that a live-in aide cannot provide them and still obtain an uninterrupted five hours of sleep.

3. A person with a documented medical need for turning and positioning may, if otherwise appropriate, qualify for either 24-hour split-shift care or live-in care depending on the frequency at which turning and positioning is required at night, regardless of whether the person has a nighttime need for transferring.

4. When determining whether a person requires 24-hour split-shift care or live-in care, the local professional director must consider whether the physician's order and other required assessments document the following:

- The existence of a medical condition that directly causes the person to need frequent assistance with personal care services tasks during the night;
- The specific task or tasks with which the person requires frequent assistance during the night;
- The frequency at which the person requires assistance with these tasks during the night;

- Whether the person requires similar assistance with these tasks during the daylight hours and, if not, why not;
- The informal supports or formal services that are willing, able and available to provide assistance with the person's nighttime tasks;
- The person's ability to use adaptive or specialized equipment or supplies to meet his or her documented medical need for assistance with nighttime tasks; and whether the person's physician has documented that, due to the person's medical condition, he or she could not safely use the equipment or supplies; and
- Whether a live-in aide would likely be able to obtain an uninterrupted five hours of sleep were live-in services to be authorized.

Reauthorization for personal care services requires similar assessments as for the initial authorization; however a nursing assessment is not required for Level I services if the physician's order indicates that the patient's medical condition is unchanged. Reauthorization of Level II services must include an evaluation of the services provided during the previous authorization period and must include a review of the nursing supervisory reports to assure that the patient's needs have been adequately met during the initial authorization period.

When there is a change in the patient's services needs which results solely from a change in his/her social circumstances, including, but not limited to, loss or withdrawal of support provided by informal caregivers, the social services department must review the social assessment, document the patient's social circumstances and make changes in the authorization as indicated. A new physician's order and nursing assessment is not required.

When there is a change in the patient's services needs which results from a change in his/her mental status including, but not limited to, loss of his/her ability to make judgments, the social services department must review the social assessment, document the changes in the patient's mental status and take appropriate action as indicated.

When there is a change in the patient's services needs which results from a change in his/her medical condition, the social services department must obtain a new physician's order and a new nursing assessment and shall complete a new social assessment. If the patient's medical condition continues to require the provision of personal care services, and the nursing assessment cannot be obtained within five working days of the request from the local social services department, the local department may make changes in the authorization in accordance with the procedures specified in 18 NYCRR 505.14(b)(5)(iv).

DISCUSSION

The hearing record establishes that the Appellant, age 92, has been in receipt of a Personal Care Services authorization in the amount of 8 hours per day, 7 days per week, totaling

56 hours weekly. The record further establishes that, in, or about, February 2018, a request was made on behalf of the Appellant for an increase in Personal Care Services from 56 hours per week to a 24-hour split-shift service schedule. Thereafter, by “Initial Adverse Determination” notice dated March 20, 2018, CPHL advised the Appellant of its determination to deny the request made on behalf of the Appellant for a 24-hour split-shift service schedule on the grounds that there was no change in the Appellant’s abilities to perform her Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of daily living.

The Appellant, who did not personally appear for this fair hearing, was represented by her daughter and son. At the hearing, the Appellant’s children confirmed that the Appellant would not be able to provide meaningful testimony regarding the determination at issue due to the Appellant’s diagnosis of dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease, and therefore, a personal appearance by the Appellant is not necessary for this Decision to be issued pursuant to Varshavsky v. Perales.

At a hearing concerning the adequacy of Medical Assistance coverage or services, the Appellant must establish that the Managed Long Term Care plan did not provide sufficient benefits or services. In a hearing regarding a denial of a request for an increase in personal care services, the Appellant must prove a documented medical need for the tasks to be performed within the additional hours. The medical documentation and testimony must establish that the Appellant is entirely dependent on caregivers for completion of her activities of daily living (ADLs) and that Appellant’s medical needs require an increase in personal care hours.

A review of the record demonstrates that the Appellant suffers from multiple physical and mental impairments, including dementia, Alzheimer’s Disease, neuropathy, heart disease, high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, and glaucoma. In addition, the current UASNY of the Appellant’s personal care needs conducted on February 22, 2018 indicates that the Appellant also suffers from weakness, fatigue, abnormalities of gait and mobility, a history of falls and incontinence of bladder. The report further indicates that the Appellant is unable to finish normal day-to-day activities, and requires maximal assistance with walking, bed mobility, toileting and transferring, and confirms that the Appellant uses chux and pull ups for incontinence. Per the UASNY, the nursing assessor found that the Appellant’s overall status in performing activities of daily living has declined in the last 90 days.

At the fair hearing, the Appellant’s children argued that the UASNY did not adequately reflect their mother’s actual needs. The representatives contended that the Appellant experiences frequent falls during the hours that an aide is not present because she attempts to independently use the commode next to her bed suffers from severe limb weakness and unsteady gait. The Appellant’s daughter explained that, the Appellant gets up to use the bathroom approximately 3 to 4 times at night and, even if the Appellant is able to utilize the commode, she has difficulty getting back into bed because she does not have the strength to get her legs up and ends up halfway in bed. The Appellant’s children argued that, because of the Appellant’s physical limitations, she requires assistance to get into and out of bed, assistance to use the toilet, as well as assistance with diaper changes during the night.

In support of their claims, the Appellant's children presented multiple letters from the Appellant's treating physicians, including one from [REDACTED], which states that the Appellant's "health has deteriorated to the point where she requires 24 hour home health care... She is unable to ambulate or transfer on her own, needs help with elimination, toileting, bathing, dressing and grooming." In addition, a letter from the Appellant's cardiologist, [REDACTED], was presented, which indicates that the Appellant has problems with her balance and experiences lightheadedness that results in multiple falls that have caused prior fractures of her hip, ribs, pelvis and wrist.

It is CPHL's position that the Appellant had no changes in her ADL status and that the Appellant's personal care needs could be met in the provided 8 hours per day, 7 days per week.

The contention made by CPHL is considered, but has limited persuasive value as the record fails to establish that the Appellant's nighttime toileting needs, including occasional diaper changes, have been adequately considered. Therefore, the totality of the testimony, and the evidence presented at the hearing, establishes that the Appellant requires frequent toileting assistance during the night that is not currently being met. Furthermore, as the Appellant requires toileting assistance 3 to 4 times per night, the record establishes that a personal care worker would be unable to obtain an uninterrupted five hours of sleep at night due to the Appellant's frequent need of toileting assistance at unscheduled times throughout the night.

Based on the foregoing, CPHL's determination not to increase the amount of personal care services for the Appellant was not proper.

DECISION AND ORDER

The determination of the Appellant's Managed Long Term Care Plan, Centers Plan for Healthy Living, not to increase and to continue to provide the Appellant with a Personal Care Service Authorization in the amount of 56 hours weekly (8 hours per day, 7 days weekly) is not correct and is reversed.

1. Centers Plan for Healthy Living is directed to increase the Appellant's Personal Care Services authorization to two (2) shifts of twelve (12) hours each (otherwise known as split-shift services) seven days per week.

As required by 18 NYCRR 358-6.4, the Agency must comply immediately with the directives set forth above.

FH# 7728192R

DATED: Albany, New York
05/10/2018

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dana P. O'Keefe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Commissioner's Designee